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APPENDIX A

THE TECHNICAL CULTURE OF THE ANDAMAN ISLANDERS

In this appendix I shall give a brief account of the technical culture of the Andaman Islanders, with a few comparative notes on the technology of the Semang of the Malay Peninsula and the Negritos of the Philippine Islands. The Andamanese, the Semang and the Philippine Negritos are so similar in physical characteristics that it is reasonable to suppose that they are descended from a single stock. It is on the basis of this hypothesis that they are all spoken of as belonging to one race, the Negrito race. It is therefore of some interest to compare the culture of these three different peoples to see if we can determine what was the culture of their ancestors.

In such hypothetical reconstructions of the past it is necessary to proceed with extreme caution, as there is no means of controlling results. The method I have adopted is to compare first of all the different types of technological products or activities found in different parts of the Andamans in order to determine as far as possible what was the technical culture of the ancestors of the Andamanese when they first reached the islands, and what changes have taken place since the islands were occupied. It is only this primitive or generalised Andamanese culture that can be compared with that of the Semang or the Philippine Negritos.

From the point of view of technical culture the natives of the Andamans must be separated into two main divisions, which will be spoken of as the Great Andaman Division and the Little Andaman Division respectively[1]. The most plausible explanation of the differences of culture and language between these two divisions has been mentioned already. We must assume that when the islands were first peopled, or at some later time, the inhabitants of the Little Andaman became isolated from those of the Great Andaman. The language and the

[1] See Introduction, p. 13.

[p. 407]

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are shown in the form of a diagram or tree. The justification for this arrangement will appear as we proceed.

There is only very scanty information available about the technical culture of the Negritos of the Malay Peninsula, whom we may speak of as the Semang. There are differences of technology between the Semang of different parts, and a careful study of these differences would serve to throw much light on changes that have been introduced since the Semang were isolated from the rest of their race. There is no doubt that the Semang have adopted many elements of their present culture from their neighbours the Sakai and others. In some instances it is possible to trace this external influence, but in others it is doubtful whether we are dealing with a primitive Semang form or with a form adopted from their neighbours[1].

The same thing must be said about the Philippine Negritos. Our information is not sufficient to enable us to discuss the local differences, nor to determine what elements of the culture have been introduced by contact with other races[2].

Habitations.

The huts of the Andamanese are best understood by considering first of all the simplest and most temporary structures. A man away from the main camp at night (on a hunting expedition) erects for himself a simple shelter of leaves. Such hunting shelters vary considerably according to circumstances. In the rainy season they are built much more substantially than in the dry season. Sometimes shelter is found between the buttresses of large trees, a few leaves being added. There is, however, one type of hunting shelter that is usual. Two poles are cut and erected perpendicularly in the ground so that they stand about four feet apart and about four feet high. To the top of these is tied, with cane or creeper, a horizontal pole. A few poles or sticks of sufficient length are placed so as to lean against the horizontal pole at an angle of about 45°, the ends resting on the ground. On these are placed any leaves that can be obtained,

[1] The information here given as to the Semang is derived from two works, Skeat and Blagden, *Pagan Races of the Malay Peninsula*, vol. I, quoted as *Skeat*, and Rudolf Martin, *Die Inlandstämme der Malayischen Halbinsel*, 1905, quoted as *Martin*.

[2] The information about the Philippine Negritos is derived from Reed, *Negritos of Zambales*, Manila, 1904, quoted as *Reed*, and A. B. Meyer, *Die Philippinen, II, Die Negritos*, Dresden, 1893, quoted as *Meyer*.

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In a village each hut is occupied by one family. In the communal hut (of either type) each family has a special portion of the hut marked off for its special use. Whether in a village or in a communal hut each family has its own small fire, at which the family meals are prepared. At one side of this fire is erected a small platform about a foot above the ground, supported on either three or four upright sticks. This platform is used for storing food. The natives of the Little Andaman erect low bamboo platforms to serve as beds, arranged round the communal hut, each family having its own. In the Great Andaman the natives, as a rule, make a bed of leaves on the ground and lay a sleeping mat on the top of this. In damp situations, however, they sometimes, as already mentioned, make a floor to the hut, raised a foot or two above the ground, and sleep on that. The Jarawa have a habit of sleeping in the wood-ashes of their fires in their cold weather hunting camps.

Turning now to the Semang, we find some differences in respect to their habitations. Those of the Semang who have not been influenced to a great extent by their neighbours and have not settled down to agricultural pursuits, never camp in the same spot for more than a few days, and have therefore no need to build anything except temporary shelters[1].

The Semang often erect their shelters in trees, well above the surface of the ground. This is a feature which distinguishes them from the Andamanese. It seems probable that these tree-shelters have been adopted by the Semang as a protection against wild beasts[2]. As there are no dangerous beasts in the Andamans, the extra labour involved in building a shelter in the branches of a tree instead of on the ground would serve no useful purpose. The difference in this respect between the Semang and the Andamanese is therefore due to a difference in the circumstances in which they live.

The typical form of Semang shelter, occupied by one family, is erected by planting three or four stout sticks or poles in the ground in a row at an angle of about 60° or 75° and lashing palm-leaves across these. The screen or roof thus formed is further supported, if necessary, with one or two poles used as props in front[3]. These shelters are similar to the Andaman shelters in having a single sloping rectangular roof, but differ from them in being supported, not by upright posts, but in an altogether less adequate manner.

[1] Skeat, p. 172.
[2] Skeat, p. 174.
[3] Skeat, p. 176, and plate. See also Annandale, *Fasciculi Malayensis, Anthropology*, Part I, Plate IV.

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However, the Semang shelters are apparently very easy to erect, and as they are only occupied for a night or two there is no inducement to the natives to make them more substantial.

The Semang sometimes make a shelter by planting a number of palm-leaves in the ground in a semicircle so that the overhanging ends meet in the centre[1].

As the Semang are constantly moving from place to place, they have little use for a communal hut of substantial build. One communal shelter has been described, which contained eleven sleeping-places arranged in two long rows. The upright timbers of the shelter consisted of young saplings planted in two opposite rows, across them being lashed the leaves of a palm. There were, besides, two central posts or pillars, each about a third of the distance from either end of the shelter, and a dozen poles placed as props or wind-braces in various positions and at various angles, in order to strengthen the structure and keep it from being blown over in a high wind. The two slopes of the roof were not united over a ridge-pole, but a longitudinal aperture was left between them for about two-thirds of the entire length of the roof, and through the gap thus caused the greater part of the smoke from the many fireplaces issued. All round the walls were ranged a number of bamboo sleeping-platforms, five to six feet in length by about three feet in breadth. The owner of each sleeping-platform or family unit possessed a separate fire or hearth[2].

We have only scanty information about the huts of the Philippine Negritos. In Zambales (Luzon) a certain number of the Negritos have adopted a settled mode of life and depend on agriculture for some part of their subsistence. The most advanced of these have adopted the form of hut common amongst their neighbours. The less settled Negritos of Zambales erect huts which are almost exactly the same as the family huts of the Andamanese. Two short upright posts are erected for the back of the hut, and two taller ones for the front, and on these four posts a rectangular roof of one slope is erected. A bamboo floor or platform is erected a foot or so above the ground, just as in some Andaman huts[3]. In the Zambales huts the upright posts are forked and the horizontal poles are supported in the fork.

At Casiguran the Negritos erect palm-leaf shelters similar to those of the Semang. A few poles are thrust into the ground at an angle and in a row and palm-leaves are attached to these, the screen being further supported with props[4].

[1] Skeat, p. 174. [2] Skeat, p. 177. [3] Reed, Plate XXXVIII. [4] Meyer, Plate X.

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A comparison of the three branches of the Negrito race in the light of present information shows that the usual form of habitation amongst them is a sloping roof or screen of palm-leaves. One form of this, the simplest to construct, but only suitable as a temporary shelter, is in common use amongst the Semang and is found amongst the Negritos of Casiguran. The other form, more permanent but requiring more labour to erect, is in common use in the Andamans and amongst the Negritos of Zambales. Of communal huts we have no evidence in the Philippines. The communal shelter of the Semang consists of two screens leaning towards one another. The two types of communal hut of the Andamans are both derived from the family hut.

HUNTING, FISHING, ETC.

The Andaman Islanders depend for their subsistence entirely upon the natural productions of the forest and the sea. They make no attempt whatever to cultivate the soil. Until the introduction of dogs in 1858 they had no domestic animals. Young pigs are occasionally kept in captivity till they are grown, but they are killed for food and are not bred in captivity. Thus the Andamanese provide themselves with food by three different forms of activity: (1) collecting such things as roots and fruits and honey, (2) fishing in the sea and in the creeks, (3) hunting the wild animals of the forest.

For hunting the Andamanese rely entirely on the bow and arrow. Since they have had dogs they occasionally make hunting spears, but they did not do so in former times. They make no use whatever of any method of trapping game or birds. For fishing they also make use of the bow and arrow, wading out on to the reefs and shooting the fish, and in this they are very skilful. Crustaceans, such as crabs and crayfish, are captured in the same way. In the North Andaman a sort of short fish spear was formerly in use as an occasional substitute for the bow and arrow. In all parts of the islands small nets are used by the women for catching small fish and prawns. In the Great Andaman large nets were formerly used for capturing turtle, dugong and large fish near the shore. At the present time the natives of the Great Andaman Division make use of harpoons with which they capture turtle, dugong and large fish from their canoes. Harpoons are not used in the Little Andaman. The Andamanese are also aware of methods of poisoning or stupefying fish in pools by means of certain plants that they crush and place in the water, but I have never seen them use this method of

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227 fishing, although they say that they formerly did so. They have no
226 fish hooks and no fish traps. At the present time a few of the natives have learnt to take fish with hook and line, but they are unable to make hooks for themselves, and have to obtain them from the Settlement at Port Blair.

222 In collecting roots a digging stick is used, and a hooked pole is
412 used for gathering fruit, but they have no other special implements in use in collecting natural productions, and have no need of any. The adze is used for obtaining molluscs and for cutting honey-combs from hollow trees.

411 It is thus clear that by far the most important utensil of the Andamanese is the bow and arrow. We may say that they are essentially a bow and arrow people. This is even more true of the natives of the Little Andaman Division than of those of the Great Andaman Division.

It may be noted here that the Andamanese have no weapons that are used only for fighting. They fight with their chief hunting weapon, the bow and arrow. Nor have they any special defensive weapons, the shield being unknown.

• 171 The Semang in their natural condition depend for their subsistence on collecting roots and fruits from the forest, on catching fish in the streams, and on hunting animals. Their mode of subsistence is thus essentially the same as that of the Andamanese. One difference is that they have not the sea from which to draw supplies, and another is that the forests in which they live afford a much larger variety of game. A number of the Semang now practice a little rude agriculture which they have undoubtedly adopted in imitation of their neighbours of other races[1].

The principal weapon of the Semang, as of the Andamanese, is the bow and arrow. In hunting they also use spears[2], thus showing a difference from the Andamanese. Some of the Semang make use of the blow-pipe with poisoned darts, but it is practically certain that they have adopted the use of this weapon from their neighbours the Sakai[3]. They also make use to some extent of traps with which to capture jungle animals and birds. The wilder Semang living in the mountains have little opportunity of obtaining fish. Those of them that dwell near rivers use fish-spears and harpoons for catching large fish, and a small basket-work scoop for catching small fry[4]. They also fish with

[1] Skeat, p. 341.
[2] Skeat, p. 270.
[3] Skeat, p. 280.
[4] Skeat, p. 205.

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rod and line, the hooks being, as a rule, roughly manufactured from bits of brass or other wire[1]. The Semang have no special fighting weapons either offensive or defensive. 171 ●

In the Philippines some of the Negritos practice a little rude agriculture[2]. It is practically certain that they have only adopted this mode of subsistence through contact with agricultural peoples of other races. They originally depended entirely upon collecting, fishing and hunting, and even those who now grow a few scanty crops devote a large part of their energies to hunting and collecting the natural products of the jungles[3]. The chief weapon of the Negritos of the Philippines, as of the Andamanese and the Semang, is the bow and arrow. They use the bow and arrow for shooting fish, having special fish-arrows[4]. It seems doubtful if they use spears, unless they have adopted them from their neighbours. In hunting deer the Negritos of Zambales use large nets like fish nets. They are acquainted with the use of traps for game but they seem to prefer to depend on the bow and arrow[5]. In the larger streams of Zambales they make fishing weirs of bamboo, after the manner of the Christianised natives of the same part[6].

As the most important weapon of the Andamanese, and indeed of the Negritos in general, is the bow, we may consider this first. Different kinds of bow are in use in different parts of the Andamans, but by a careful comparison of them it is possible to show how they are all derived from one original pattern. 411

The first kind of bow to be described is that in use in the Little Andaman. These bows are all made of a reddish-brown wood (possibly *Mimusops littoralis*). They are cut with an adze from a straight piece of wood, and are planed but not polished. The length varies within fairly wide limits. Six specimens selected as typical have lengths of 131, 150, 159·5, 163, 168 and 188 centimetres, giving an average of about 160 centimetres (= 63 inches). In section the bow is markedly convex on the one side and slightly convex on the other. The two figures (Fig. 1) show the section at the middle and at a point 7 cm. from the end of a typical specimen. The shape in section varies a little from one example to another, and the dimensions of breadth and thickness also vary. At the broadest point, which is in the middle, the average breadth of six bows is 3·2 cm., the broadest being 3·7 cm., and the narrowest 2·3 cm. The average thickness in the middle is 1·8 cm.,

[1] Skeat, p. 205. [2] Reed, p. 44. [3] Reed, p. 44.
[4] Reed, p. 47. [5] Reed, p. 47. [6] Reed, p. 48.

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411 side. This is the only bow in the whole of the Andamans in which I ever saw this feature. In all other bows of whatever type the outer side is markedly convex and the inner side is either concave, flat or only slightly convex.

It is now possible to compare one with another the different forms of bow in use in the Andamans. It would seem almost certain that the North Andaman bow can only have been derived from the form in use in the South Andaman or from one very similar to it. It is only after they were in the habit of making bows with an outward curve in the lower portion that the natives could have devised the method of seasoning this portion of the bow and keeping it in the reversed or half-strung position. It is unnecessary to argue the matter in detail, and we may conclude that the North Andaman type is derived from the South Andaman type.

It is less certain, but still highly probable, that the South Andaman form was derived from a bow similar to that still in use in the Little Andaman. The South Andaman toy bow shows a stage intermediate between the Little Andaman bow and the usual South Andaman form. The section of this toy bow is very similar to that of the Little Andaman bow. It has no blades, and therefore no waist for the handle. The shape, however, is asymmetrical. Owing to the different method of stringing it, the shoulder at the end of the bow is unnecessary, and the bow is strengthened (prevented from splitting so easily) by tapering the end to a point instead. The difference between the toy bow and the general South Andaman bow is the presence in the latter of the two blades and the waist. The broadening of the bow into the blades is necessary in order to prevent it from accidentally reversing itself.

411 171 We have still to consider the modified form of the Jarawa bow. The origin of this is easy to discover by the examination of a few typical specimens. Since the Jarawa have been in the South Andaman they have been in hostile contact with the tribes of

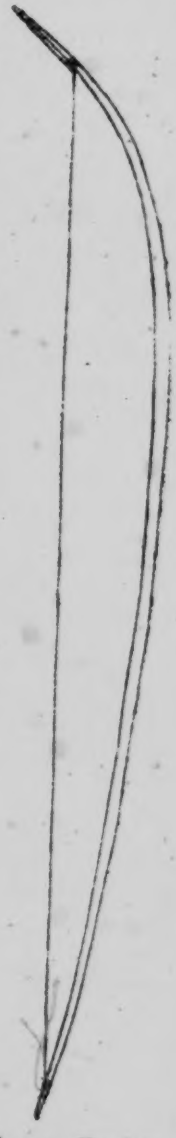

Fig. 14. Toy bow of the North Andaman

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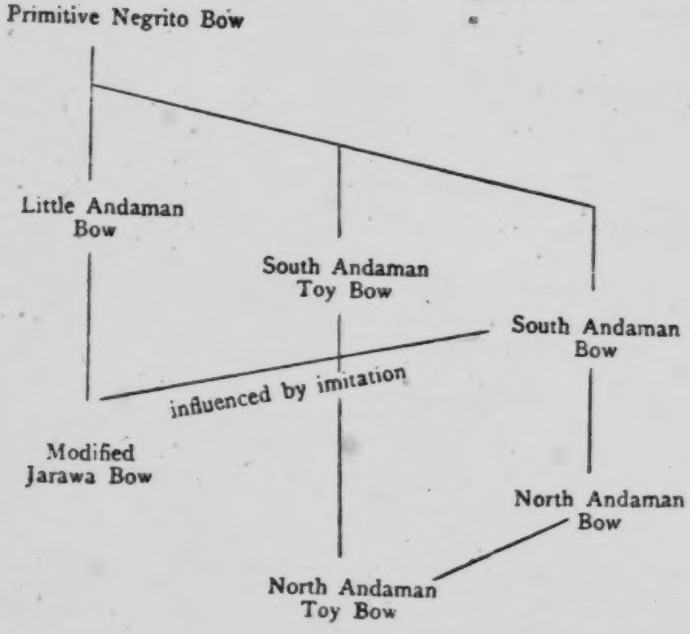
the South Andaman Division. They have had opportunities of handling bows of the kind made by these tribes, and they have apparently discovered that these bows are more efficient than their own, but they have had no opportunity, such as only friendly intercourse would give, of discovering the principles on which the South Andaman bow is made. They have attempted to imitate it to the best of their ability, and this they have done (1) by making their bows longer and broader, (2) by making them concavo-convex in section instead of convexo-convex, (3) by cutting them occasionally from wood that gives them an outward curve in the



lower portion, (4) by imitating the shape of the handle without, however, giving the bow a waist, (5) by serving over the bow-string with thread at the point where the arrow touches it, (6) by ornamenting their bows with incised and painted patterns. These are the only differences between the modified Jarawa type and the Little Andaman type, and all these may be explained as attempts to imitate the bows of the South Andaman Division. In not a single one of the modified Jarawa bows that I have seen is the fundamental principle of the South Andaman bow successfully applied.

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We may conclude that the ancestors of the Andamanese at one time used a bow resembling that in use in the Little Andaman at the present day, and that the S-shaped bow of the Great Andaman has been invented since the separation of the two main divisions of the race.

It is not possible, owing to lack of sufficient information, to determine exactly the types of bow used by the Semang. The following notes are based on only six specimens, two of which are in the Museum of Ethnology at Cambridge[1], while the others are in the British Museum. Four of the specimens are sufficiently similar to one another to be regarded as belonging to one type, which seems to be the usual type of Semang bow. In length they are 165, 174·5, 182 and 197·5 cm., and at the middle they vary in breadth between 2·5 and 3 cm. Three are of palm-wood, and the other is of a light-coloured

Fig. 15. Section across the middle of four Semang bows

but tough kind of wood. The shape of the section in the middle of the bow varies considerably in the different specimens, as shown in Fig. 15. There is some uncertainty as to which is the inside, and which is the outside of the bow. At each end there is a shoulder, the point or tip at one end being in every instance considerably longer than the other. The string in each case is a three-ply rope, having a spliced eye at one end and being fastened to the bow with a knot at the other end.

The other two specimens do not conform to this type. One is of wood, 134 cm. long, and 3·5 cm. broad in the middle. One end is provided with a notch on each side for the string, while the other end has three pairs of notches. The string is a three-ply cord with a loop or eye at each end. The other specimen is made of bamboo, and is 147 cm. long and 2·25 cm. broad in the middle. One end has one

[1] For information about the two specimens at Cambridge I am indebted to the kindness of Mr J. W. Layard.

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pair of notches and the other has two pairs. The string is two-ply with a loop at each end. 411 171

What we may perhaps regard as the usual type of Semang bow thus differs from the bow of the Little Andaman in three important respects, (1) in having a longer point at one end than at the other[1], (2) in having a string of three-ply rope instead of a strand of twisted fibre, and (3) in the variations in the section at the middle. From the four specimens available it is not possible to determine around what norm or norms the section of different specimens varies.

Turning to the Negritos of the Philippine Islands, although a number of bows have been described by Meyer[2], the available information is not sufficient to enable us to determine what are the different types, and what is their relation one to another. Amongst the different varieties of bow used by the Negritos there is one which is very similar to the bow of the Little Andaman. It has a rounded or convex outer side, and a flattened inner side. The string loops on to a point at each end, and the string itself is formed of twisted fibre.

From a study of the available material it seems that we are justified in concluding that the primitive Negrito bow was made of wood, with a shoulder at each end, probably with a section rounded on one side and flattened or keeled on the other, and that it had a string of twisted fibre with a loop or eye at one end, the other end being attached with a knot.

The Andaman Islanders use two different kinds of arrows, one for shooting fish and the other for shooting pigs. 411

The common fish-arrow, as at present used in all parts of the Great Andaman Division, consists of three parts—a shaft, a fore-shaft, and a point. The shaft is a length of bamboo straightened by means of heat, and may vary in length from 70 to 110 cm. At one end the bamboo is cut off about 3 cm. beyond one of the nodes, and a nock is made (Fig. 16). At this end the shaft is roughened with a *Cyrena* shell so as to give a firm grip for the fingers. At the other end the shaft is tapered for about a centimetre. At this end the bamboo is roughened with a shell to give a hold to the thread with which it is bound. The fore-shaft is a length of wood from 15 to 40 cm. long. One end is slightly tapered so that it fits tightly into the end of the bamboo shaft. The other end is tapered to a point, which is flattened on one side. The

[1] According to Skeat the end with the longer point is the lower end of the bow (Skeat, p. 273), but Martin (p. 785) describes a bow of this type and states that the longer point is the upper end.

[2] Meyer, pp. 13—17 and Plates VI—VIII.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
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Arrows of this kind are used in pig-hunting. The fore-shaft is inserted into the end of the shaft, the cord attaching the two being wound spirally round the end of the shaft. When a pig is struck the barbs prevent the head from coming out of the wound. As the pig attempts to run away the shaft catches against the undergrowth of the jungle and comes loose from the fore-shaft. Sooner or later the shaft becomes entangled in the undergrowth and holds the wounded pig fast till the hunters can come up with it and despatch it. It is obvious that the cord of the arrow needs to be so strong that the pig cannot break it.

The natives of the Great Andaman tribes say that before they had plenty of iron they made similar pig-arrows with heads of shell and barbs of pig's bone.

The natives of the Little Andaman make a pig-arrow very similar to that of the Great Andaman tribes, but on the average somewhat longer. The cord attaching the fore-shaft to the shaft consists of a length of double two-ply rope of *Hibiscus* fibre. The binding of the arrow is done with thread of the *Gnetum* fibre instead of *Anadendron*, and is not coated with composition but is smeared with bees'-wax. The barb (there being usually only one) is not fixed in the same plane as the head, but in the plane at right angles to it. (Fig. 20.)

Amongst the Jarawa the head of the pig-arrow is attached to the fore-shaft by a different method, holes being made in the iron through which the thread that holds it is passed. (Fig. 21.)

Another kind of pig-arrow is sometimes made in the Great Andaman that has not a detachable head. The shaft is a length of bamboo into one end of which is fitted a fore-shaft of wood. The end of this fore-shaft is split and a head of iron is inserted into it and bound there. Such an arrow may be without barbs or may have one or two barbs of iron. It is used only rarely and then chiefly for despatching a pig that has already been struck by an arrow of the usual kind. The natives say that in former times arrows of this kind were used in fighting in preference to ordinary pig-arrows, which, however, were also used.

In former times the natives of the Great Andaman, according to their own statements, made an arrow consisting of a bamboo shaft at the end of which was inserted a head made of *Areca* wood. An arrow of this kind, made for me by a native, is shown in Fig. 22.

None of the arrows made in any part of the Andamans is feathered.

In a comparison of the arrows of the Andamanese with those of the Semang and the Philippine Negritos the most interesting point is that

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all three branches of the Negrito race use arrows with detachable heads. Arrows of this kind from the Philippines are described by Meyer[1].

An important point of difference would seem to be that while the Andamanese do not feather their arrows the Semang and the Negritos of the Philippines do so. It would seem, however, from the account of Semang arrows given by Skeat[2] that the feathering is such that it is of no actual service in directing the flight of the weapon, and that it is doubtful whether the Semang really understand the principle of feathering, or whether they do not employ it as the mutilated survival of more intelligent methods or perhaps make use of it for solely magical purposes.

Another important point of difference is that the Semang poison their arrows, while the Andamanese do not. In this connection it must be remembered that the former people have for long been neighbours of people who use blow-pipes with poisoned darts.

After the bow and arrow the most important hunting weapon of the Great Andaman is the harpoon which is used in capturing dugong, turtle, porpoise, and large fish. The harpoon consists of a head, a shaft and a line. The line is a length of rope of *Hibiscus* fibre of as much as twenty fathoms or more in length. The shaft is a bamboo of about 18 feet in length. One end is cut off fairly near a node and is then served over with thread, and slightly hollowed. The head consists of a long piece of iron, such as a stout nail, brought to a sharp point at one end. The other end is served over with thread in such a way as to make it fit fairly tightly into the end of the bamboo shaft. Some distance from the point of the head two barbs of iron are attached by thread, and between this point and the lower end the line is attached. (See Fig. 23.)

A man using the harpoon stands on the forward platform of the canoe, holding the bamboo shaft in his hand. The head is inserted in the upper end of this, and the line passes over his shoulder and is coiled in the bottom of the canoe, the other end being attached to the forward out-rigger boom or to the thwart that takes its place in a large canoe. He poles the canoe along the reef with the harpoon shaft. When about to make a throw he raises the shaft till he can hold the butt end in his right hand, with the point directed towards the fish or turtle, and he then leaps forward so that if he succeeds in his aim the weapon strikes with all the force of his weight behind it. When the turtle or fish is struck the bamboo shaft floats loose and this is secured

[1] Meyer, Plates VI and VIII.

[2] Skeat, p. 274.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
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285 process that is employed in a number of different ways by the Andamanese. The most important development of wrapped work amongst them is seen in the pot-basket of the South Andaman, in the baskets of the Jarawa and Little Andaman and in the pig's-skull basket-work of the Jarawa.

Simple twined work is rare in the Andamans. There is hardly any example of it except in the mats of the South Andaman. It would seem probable that the North Andaman mat technique of wrapped-twined work is the earlier, being more in agreement with what we may call the technical habits of the Andamanese, and that the South Andaman mat technique is a later elaboration. In this connection it may be remembered that plaiting, in which also several wefts are twisted one over another, is rarely used in the Andamans.

The process of nippering, by which the natives of the Great Andaman make the cord of their pig-arrows, and the somewhat similar process used in the Little Andaman in making personal ornaments, are quite in accordance with the general trend of the technique, but when such a process is applied to a number of parallel strips of material instead of to two only it constitutes a step towards wicker-work. It is notable, however, that it is only in the Great Andaman that wicker-work is used, and this suggests that it has only been invented or adopted since the separation of the two divisions of the Andamanese.

285 171 It is very tempting to regard the different forms of basket, in the order in which they are described above, as so many stages of a process of evolution. It is, at any rate, worth while to state the argument, and to show what the differences between them exactly are. In the North Andaman pot-covering we have (1) the technique simple wrapped work, and (2) the basis six strips of cane tied together in the middle. In the South Andaman pot-basket we have both these features, but the difference in the shape of the pots allows them to be carried in a true basket and we have therefore (3) a rim, with (4) a peculiar method of attaching the uprights to the rim, (5) a number of horizontal (wrapped) wefts instead of one or two, and (6) strengthening strips applied to the horizontal wefts in wrapped work. In the rougher kind of basket made in the Little Andaman we have nearly all the features of the South Andaman pot-basket. The only differences, apart from the shape of the basket, which in each case follows the shape of the pot, are (2) more than six uprights may be used, and (5) the number of horizontal wefts, i.e. the number of spiral turns taken round the basket, is as a rule greater. In the more carefully made Little Andaman basket there are

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
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several differences. The uprights are fine whole canes instead of strips of split cane. It is undoubtedly more difficult to procure whole canes of the proper size than simply to split up larger canes, but where the technique is wrapped work the circular section of the uprights improves the quality of the resulting basket, as a strip of cane is more easily wound round a whole cane than round a split cane, and there is less chance of it breaking when a strain is put upon it. Another difference is that in the better Little Andaman baskets the rows of weft are as close together as the peculiar technique will allow. This makes a finer and stronger basket, and is an obvious improvement. The third difference is that in these baskets the strengthening strips are applied not in wrapped work, but in wrapped-twined work, which, however, we have seen is a common technique in the Andamans. In the better baskets of the Little Andaman we find a special feature of some interest in the gap that is left in the weaving near the rim, to allow of strings being tied across the mouth.

When we look at the South Andaman basket the first thing that strikes us is that it is really a conical basket of much the same shape as the Little Andaman basket, but with the bottom dented in to make a kick, so allowing the basket to stand on its bottom. This denting is only rendered possible, however, by the fact that the uprights of the South Andaman basket are thin strips of cane that can be easily bent, and this again depends on the use of wicker-work in the basket instead of wrapped work. It must be remembered that the top of the weaving is finished off with three rows of wrapped-twined work, and this suggests that there may possibly have been a stage of development between the Little Andaman basket and the South Andaman form, in which the uprights were thin strips of cane, and the weft was applied in wrapped-twined work from top to bottom. This, however, is only a surmise. It does certainly seem probable that the South Andaman basket is derived immediately from a form of basket similar to that of the Little Andaman, the great difference being the change to wicker-work technique. The method of attaching the uprights to the rim was doubtless introduced owing to the fact that the original method is unsatisfactory when the uprights are thin and easily broken strips, instead of stout ones.

The North Andaman basket seems to have been derived from one similar to that of the South Andaman by the introduction of two changes, (1) the use of different materials, and (2) the change of shape. The materials used in the north are such as to give a basket on the whole stronger and more durable than that of the south. If a heavy

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

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weight be carried in a southern basket the pressure of the basket on the back tends to crack the canes of which it is composed. In the case of a northern basket it may lose its shape, but the materials of which it is composed will give or bend without cracking so readily. The shape of the northern basket is certainly an improvement, as it avoids the top-heaviness of the southern shape. Both the northern and the southern baskets have a gap between the top of the weaving and the rim, like the basket of the Little Andaman.

Thus every step, or nearly every step, in a hypothetical process of evolution is exhibited in the different forms of basket-work. First we have the pot-covering of the North Andaman, then the pot-basket of the South Andaman, then the rougher kind of Little Andaman basket, of the same shape as the pot, then the South Andaman basket of cane with a kick and finally the basket of the North Andaman. The better kind of Little Andaman basket is simply an independent improvement of the other, involving no new technique.

However much or little probability we may attach to this hypothetical reconstruction of the history of basket-work in the Andamans, one thing does seem fairly certain, and that is that the original ancestors of the Andamanese were not acquainted with wicker-work, or had no use for it. In the Little Andaman Division only wrapped work and wrapped-twined work are used, and the wicker-work of the Great Andaman Division has almost certainly been adopted since the two divisions were separated. The consideration of the general technical bias of the Andamanese in their dealings with flexible materials supports the view that in their case wicker-work is later than wrapped work and wrapped-twined work. It seems more than likely that the Andamanese of the larger island have invented wicker-work in its simplest form on the basis of a previous technique of wrapped and wrapped-twined work. To us wicker-work seems such a simple process as almost to need no inventing. It must be recognized however that the general bias of the Andamanese is against using materials in this way. The Andaman Islander shows a decided preference for those processes in which he uses a single flexible material which he winds or wraps round other rigid or flexible material, as in nippering, or wrapped work or wrapped-twined work.

It is impossible to obtain confirmation of this view, however, from a comparison of the Andamanese with the Semang and the Philippine Negritos. The Semang make mat-work bags and wallets of check, and they make (or use) baskets of hexagonal work. Both check and

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

hexagonal work are used by other races in the Malay Peninsula and in Malaysia generally. The present mats and baskets of the Semang cannot therefore be regarded as original Negrito productions. They have almost certainly been adopted through contact with other cultures.

The same thing would seem to apply to the present basket-work of the Philippine Negritos, of which however we know very little.

Netted bags of string are made by the women of both the Great Andaman and the Little Andaman Divisions, and are used for carrying or storing small objects such as shells, fruit, roots, etc. The string used for these is made from the fibre of the *Gnetum edule* in the Little

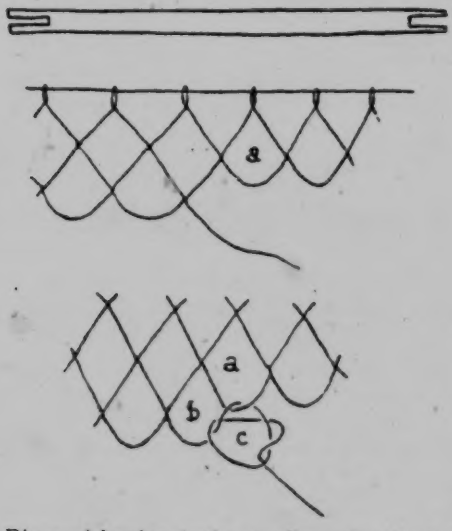

Fig. 37. Diagram showing netting needle, and method of netting

Andaman, and is generally made from the same fibre in the Great Andaman, but in the latter division the fibre of *Hibiscus scandens* is prized for this purpose and is used instead of that of the *Gnetum* when it is available. Small hand fishing nets are made by the women in both divisions from thread of *Gnetum* fibre. In the Great Andaman Division netting is also used for personal ornaments, the thread used for this purpose being generally made from *Anadendron* fibre.

The mode of netting is always the same. Netting needles are used, made from slips of bamboo or cane, and varying in size according to the work for which they are intended. The netting string or thread is wound on to this needle. For the foundation of the net a short

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

415 The pots are used for cooking, i.e. for boiling meat and vegetables. In the North Andaman small pots are specially made for melting the composition used for covering the binding on the heads of arrows.

415 Neither the Semang nor the Philippine Negritos make any kind of pottery. The origin of Andamanese pottery therefore is a problem of some interest. It is almost certain that the early Andamanese were acquainted with pottery before they were divided into the Great Andaman and Little Andaman Divisions. One of the very few words which is the same in all Andamanese languages is the word for pot, *buču* in the Little Andaman, *buǰ* in Aka-Bea and *peč* in Aka-Jeru. The most reasonable hypothesis would therefore seem to be that the Andamanese learnt the method of making pottery by coiling before they reached the Andaman Islands but after they had become separated

Fig. 39. Shape of South Andaman pot; actual diameter 24 cm.

from that part of the Negrito race from which the Semang and the Philippine Negritos are descended. Of course it is possible that the art of pottery may have been an original possession of the Negritos and that the Semang and Philippine Negritos may have lost it. A people could easily lose the art if they were compelled in the course of their migrations to spend three or four generations in a region that lacked clay suitable for the purpose.

415 [322] The Andamanese make buckets of wood, which they use for carrying and holding a supply of water. A solid piece is cut from the trunk of a soft-wooded tree and is hollowed out with a chisel made by attaching the blade of an adze to a stick. The natural form of the wood is retained, only the bark being removed from the outside while the inside is chiselled out to leave sides of about a centimetre thick and a bottom of somewhat greater thickness. In order to render the bottom

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Personal Ornament; Little Andaman.

The personal ornaments of the Little Andaman and of the Jarawa are different from those of the Great Andaman Division, and therefore need to be described separately.

Ornaments of bark. Strips of bark (? *Celtis cinnamonea*) are worn by the men round the waist and round the arm.

Ornamental cord. These are the ornaments most frequently met with both in the Little Andaman and amongst the Jarawa. The basis is a strip of cane, varying in breadth in different examples. On one side of this are laid strips of the yellow skin of the *Dendrobium*, varying in number according to the breadth of the cane, and the whole is served over or bound with thread. The technique in shown in Fig. 41, which represents diagrammatically the method adopted when there are two strips of *Dendrobium* skin. Such ornamental cord is made in pieces of considerable length. Often tassels of thread (of *Ficus hispida* fibre) are attached to it at intervals. The cord is worn wound round the waist, the neck, or the arm. Both men and women wear it.

Woman's girdle. In the Little Andaman this is made of a number of fine strips of cane tied together with thread. At the front is attached

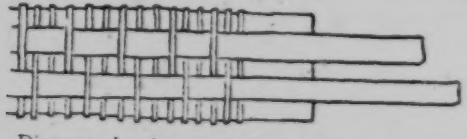

Fig. 41. Diagram showing method of making ornamental cord, Little Andaman

a tassel of fibre made from young unopened palm-leaves (the fibre called *koro* in Aka-Jeru).

Woman's shoulder strap. The women of the Little Andaman wear a strip of bark over the shoulders, crossing over the chest and passing beneath the breasts.

The above brief description of the ornaments of the Andamanese is perhaps sufficient for the purpose of this appendix, which is to determine as far as possible the elements of a primitive Negrito culture. Any complete account of the subject would need a large number of figures and a discussion of many comparatively unimportant details. The first point of importance to be noted is that the personal ornaments of the Little Andaman Division differ markedly from those of the Great Andaman Division. One difference is that the *Pandanus* leaf, which is used so much and in so many ways in the Great Andaman,

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

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seems not to be used at all in the Little Andaman. Another is that shells, which are much used in the Great Andaman, are used to a far less extent in the Little Andaman. The natives of the Little Andaman told me that they sometimes make ornaments of *Dentalium* shell, but I did not see any such ornament, nor any other ornament of shell, in use. The ornaments of netting worn in the Great Andaman, and forming the usual dancing costume, seem not to be used in the Little Andaman. Finally, perhaps most important of all, there is at present no evidence that the natives of the Little Andaman make ornaments of either human or animal bones. In the Little Andaman the lower jaw of a child is preserved by the parents and is worn by them, but I never saw a human skull (whether of child or adult) so worn, and I was not able to obtain any evidence of the use of strings of human bones such as are constantly seen in a camp of the Great Andaman.

The points of similarity between the ornaments of the Little Andaman and those of the Great Andaman are very few. One of the most striking is the great use that is made in both divisions of the yellow skin of the *Dendrobium*. It seems probable that here we have evidence of one element of a primitive Negrito culture, for the Negritos of the Philippines also are fond of using a yellow vegetable fibre for their personal ornaments. So far as it is possible to judge from the figure and description, the armlet given by Meyer in Plate III, No. 11, seems to be very similar to the ornamental cord of the Little Andaman. It is described as a "mit schwarz und gelben Grasstreifchen umflocktener Bambus-reif."

Another point of resemblance between the Great Andaman and the Little Andaman is that in both very little use is made of feathers or flowers. The natives of the Great Andaman never make use of the feathers of birds. The Jarawa occasionally wear in a chaplet a feather of the king-crow (*Dicrurus macrocercus*) if we may judge from a specimen in the British Museum. The natives of the Little Andaman certainly do not as a rule make any use of feathers. It would seem, from all accounts, that the Semang and the Philippine Negritos do not make any considerable use of feathers for personal ornament. We may perhaps hazard the conclusion that this is a mark of the Negrito culture distinguishing them from such people as the Papuans or Australians in whose personal ornaments the feathers of birds occupy an important place.

In the Great Andaman flowers are not used as personal ornaments. In the British Museum there is an ornament from the Little Andaman consisting of a strip of bark-fibre with a few flowers attached.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

As regards personal ornament, therefore, the only elements of a primitive Negrito culture that we seem to be able to trace in the Andamans at the present day are (1) the use of yellow vegetable fibre, and (2) the absence of any considerable use of feathers.

One element of a primitive Andamanese culture, though not necessarily of a primitive Negrito culture, would seem to be the use of a tassel of the fibre obtained from an unopened palm-leaf which is used by women to cover their genitals in the Little Andaman, and was similarly used until recently in the North Andaman.

Hair-dressing, Scarification, and Body-painting.

At the present time the usual method of hair-dressing in the Great Andaman is to shave a portion of the scalp all round so as to leave a sort of skull-cap of hair, as may be seen in many of the plates of this volume. In some cases a "parting" is made by shaving a narrow strip over the crown. (See Plate XV, for example.) When the hair grows so long as to be uncomfortable the whole head is shaved, and it is then permitted to grow again. In these days the natives cut their hair whenever they have an opportunity of obtaining a pair of scissors. In the Little Andaman women and old men are frequently to be seen with the head entirely shaved. The younger men shave away the lower edge of the hair all round in the same way as the natives of the Great Andaman, but this may be a recent practice.

The fashion of hair-dressing, at any rate for women, has changed within recent times, for Mr Man wrote in 1882 that "the majority of the women every week or ten days shave their heads almost entirely, leaving only two narrow parallel lines of hair, termed *gur*, from the crown to the nape of the neck[1]." At the present time this style of hair-dressing has fallen entirely into disuse, and the women do their hair in the same way as the men.

The operation of shaving, which is done with a flake of glass or quartz, is performed by women, and never, or very rarely, by men.

Mention has been made in an earlier part of the work of the way in which the natives of the Great Andaman scarify the skin of the body and limbs with a flake of glass or quartz. The Semang do not scarify themselves in this way, but some, at any rate, of the Negritos of the Philippines do.

The natives of the Great Andaman, as described earlier in this work, paint their bodies with a grey clay called *ədu* or *og*, with a fine

[1] Man, *op. cit.* p. 77.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

501 canoe was 18 inches in diameter at the smaller end and perhaps 30 inches wide at the larger end.

This description shows that the canoe of the North Sentinel is on the whole more like that of the Little Andaman than like that of the Great Andaman.

501 171 It seems probable that the Andaman Islands were peopled by sea from the coast of Burma. If this were so, then the original ancestors of the Andamanese must have been in possession of canoes. A consideration of the present Andaman canoes suggests that their ancestors had canoes with a single outrigger on the starboard side, with a number of booms. Of the different methods of attaching the booms to the float, it is possible that the method now in use in the Little Andaman (and apparently also in the North Sentinel) is primitive, and that the Great Andaman attachment is an improvement that has been invented since the separation of the two divisions. On the other hand it is not impossible that the Great Andaman attachment is primitive, and that in the Little Andaman we have a degeneration that might be due to the fact that the Little Andaman (and equally the North Sentinel) provides much less scope for maritime pursuits than the Great Andaman.

The recent invention of the large canoe in the Great Andaman and the adoption of the principle of the oar shows that the Andamanese readily adopt new inventions when these are clearly of service to them.

Turning now to the Semang, as these people live inland they have no use for canoes. They make rafts of bamboos lashed together with which they float down the rivers, returning overland.

Some of the Philippine Negritos seem to live on the coast and possibly have canoes, but nothing is known about these.

Conclusion.

171 174 The examination of the technical culture of the Andamanese given above has been sufficient to enable us to make a few statements as to what was probably the culture of the Negritos before they were split up into isolated groups. It is highly probable that they obtained their subsistence solely by hunting and collecting vegetable products. They had bows and arrows, the form of bow being probably fairly similar to that used at the present day in the Little Andaman, while for hunting the larger animals they had arrows with detachable heads. They possibly had no knowledge of any way of making implements of stone,

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

but made use only of such materials as wood, bone, and shell. It is not probable that they possessed the art of making pottery, and their basketry and mat-work were probably confined to very simple forms. In their personal ornaments there is reason to think that they showed a fondness for bright yellow vegetable fibre, and made little or no use of the feathers of birds. The ornamentation of their utensils was probably confined to the use of the simplest forms of geometric design with a preponderance of the zig-zag and the lozenge. Finally their huts consisted of a single sloping roof sufficient to afford shelter for a single family or larger huts consisting of such small huts joined together.

We have seen that since the Andamanese have occupied their present home, or at any rate since the Great Andaman Division and the Little Andaman Division have been separated from one another, many changes, some of considerable importance, have taken place in the Andaman technology. In general it would seem that the technical culture of the Great Andaman has changed more than that of the Little Andaman. Putting aside the effect on the technology of the introduction of iron, there is no evidence that any of the changes that have taken place in the Great Andaman have been due to outside influence. Important modifications have taken place in the form of the bow, in the forms and technique of baskets, and in personal ornaments, and in all these instances there is no reason to think that these changes have not been brought about by the natives themselves without the influence of contact with other people. Their method of working iron, based as it is, to all appearance, on their former method of working shell, shows that even here, though the iron itself came to them from outside, and even though they may have learnt its use from seeing it used by aliens, still they have not learnt from others how to fashion the metal into shape by heating it. Thus, so far as their technical culture is concerned, there is no evidence whatever that the Andamanese have ever been influenced by contact with any other race since the time, now many centuries ago, when they first reached the islands.

On the other hand there is some probability that the ancestors of the Andamanese, before they first reached the islands, or at any rate before the isolation of the Little Andaman from the Great Andaman, had learnt from some other race how to make pottery, and it is possible that at the same time they may have acquired other elements of their culture, such as the outrigger canoe. We may even give a guess as to the particular culture from which the ancestors of the

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
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Andamanese may have adopted these elements, which may well have been that of a branch of that people of whom an offshoot peopled the Nicobars.

Confirmation of these hypotheses, if confirmation be ever forthcoming, can only be obtained in the study of the history of races and of culture in south-eastern Asia. Until we have much fuller knowledge of the culture of the Semang and the Negritos of the Philippines, any conclusions that may be drawn from the study of the Andamanese alone must be regarded as provisional working hypotheses only, and it is as such that they are here put forward.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

savage tribes,[1] imagine themselves gifted with superior wisdom, and can hardly be blamed if they endeavour to turn their talents to account by imposing a little on the credulity of their neighbours.

Tribal Distribution.—1. The inhabitants of these islands are divided into at least nine tribes,[2] linguistically distinguished, even if we reckon as one those communities to which I have already alluded under the title of *jărawa-*, among whom it is not improbable further divisions and dialects may eventually be discovered. The conjecture that they are one is merely based on the assertions of the people of South Andaman, and on the circumstance that all the weapons, utensils, huts, &c., of the *jărawa-*, which we have been able to examine, appear to be constructed invariably on the same model, while all such members of the various scattered communities as we have had the opportunity of observing, resemble each other in abstaining from the practice, so general among all the eight Great Andaman tribes, of shaving their heads and tattooing their persons. Still, these outward similarities are manifestly insufficient, affording as they do mere negative evidence, whereas our present knowledge, so tardily acquired, of there being inland communities, called *ē̆rem-tâ̆ga-*, dwelling in the heart of South and Middle Andaman, who are allied in all respects, save in their mode of life, with the *ârjô̆to-*, or coast communities of their respective tribes, would seem to justify the belief that hereafter the aborigines of Little Andaman will be found to present not only distinctions of this nature but differences also of dialect, as is the case with the inhabitants of both North and Middle Andaman, which are known to be divided into no less than six tribes.

2. As to the numerical strength of these several tribes it is impossible to speak with any degree of certainty, for, as you are aware, there is no part of the country which is not covered with jungle, more or less impenetrable to any but the aborigines themselves, while their capacity for estimating and expressing numbers is wholly inadequate to assist us in forming any conclusions on the subject. The surmise that the entire group contains about 4,000 souls is based on the calculation that the *.bŏ̄jig-ngī̆yi-* tribe with whom we are most intimate do not at the present day exceed 400, though at the time of our advent in 1858, they are believed to have numbered about 1,000.

Topography.—1. The chief geographical landmarks of these islands are :—

1st. *Saddle Peak*, a massive hill rising to the height of

[1] *Vide* Lubbock, "On the Origin of Civilisation," &c., 4th Ed., pp. 250–1.

[2] For the names of the various tribes, and the localities they occupy, the reader is referred to the accompanying map.

3: Temple G-5 (1901) 1903 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

APPENDIX A.

POINTS OF AGREEMENT AND DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE ANDAMANESE AND THE SEMANGS.

The Semangs are found in Northern Perak, Kedah, Kelantan, Trengganu, and Northern Pahang in the Malay Peninsula. They have come considerably under outside influence and especially under that of the wavy-haired (Sakai) and the long-haired (Jakun, wild Malay) tribes of the Peninsula and even of the civilised Malays themselves.

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Points of Agreement of Semang with Andamanese.

Hair: In colour and growth.
Height: Men 57 to 58 inches, women 53½ to 54½ inches.
Skin: In texture and colour.
Shape of head: Mesaticephalic and brachycephalic.
Eyes: In colour and shape.
Food: In its nature and elaborate preparation.
Huts: In leaf shelters; with the Ónge-Jarawas, in communal huts, though not so good.
Funerals: In ceremonies and probable former disinterment of bones.
Belief: In the bridge to Paradise.
Bows: With the Ónge-Jarawas only.

Points of Difference between Semangs and Andamanese.

Face: In the great variation of the Andamanese face.
Implements: In the blow-gun and *poisoned* arrows and spears.
Hunting: In trapping game.
Feeding: Men before women.
Quivers: In having reed quivers; Andamanese stick their arrows in the waist belt.
Ornamentation: In quality and artistic merit.
Ornaments: In personal ornaments, and in piercing the nose.
Huts: In rock-shelters, cave dwellings, tree huts, barricaded huts.
Clothing: Of hammered barks; loin-cloth for men, petticoat for women.
Magic: In its practice and in use of magical designs.
Music: In nose-pipe and bamboo castanets.
Songs: In their nature.
Marriage: Based on purchase and in ceremonies.
Beliefs: In Shamanism, metamorphism into tigers of living men, in ideas as to "God."
Language: In its mixture with Malay and Mon; basis can be proved *perhaps* to be (? Ónge-Jarawa) Andamanese, though the specimens I have seen afford very little hope of this.

Also a portion of the Semangs have fixed habitations and a rude agriculture, this latter capacity being entirely absent in the Andamanese.

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

spot for centuries leads to the formation of kitchen-middens [1]. In the temporary camps something similar happens: the only difference consists in the fact that rubbish dumps only accumulate at the back of the temporary shelters, as a consequence of their peculiar shape that I shall not describe here. These dumps are heaven-sent love nests for insects of many species, mostly flies of a metallic green colour. They follow the Onge from camp to camp and thrive on scraps from human meals. When travelling in Little Andaman I was unmistakably warned of the nearby presence of Onge camps by the appearance of those familiar living beings.

The filth that coats the floors of communal Onge huts offers an ideal breeding ground also for myriads of fleas. Dogs spread them all over Little Andaman. Owing to the fact that the communal huts are deserted for months at a time during the dry season, the fleas become hungry and assault human beings vehemently whenever possible. When visiting empty communal huts I myself, and the persons with me, were plagued by such assaults. Fleas advanced suddenly from feet to head in thick, shimmering brown layers, covering first our legs. We were obliged to strip and douse ourselves with insect-repellents. As for other parasites, including ticks and mosquitos, equally plentiful in Little Andaman, the Onge do not appear to be inconvenienced by them.

The communal huts are used for another purpose as well, unhygienic but of high ethnological interest: the interment of human corpses. When they die, the inmates are buried beneath their beds. In other words, communal huts are also cemeteries. Many human skeletons are found by digging under the beds. Until 1952 this fact was unknown about the Andaman Islanders although it is encountered in all Onge communal huts without exception. An analysis of this custom led to further discoveries: the Onge wish to compel the spirit of a deceased person to remain close to the living as a protection, so they offer it the communal hut for an abode, the idea being that a spirit cannot wander far from the bones of its former body. A series of Onge practices point to this belief: felled enemies must be burned and reduced to ashes in order to render them harmless. Their hostile souls, according to the Onge, rise toward the sky in smoke as the bones are consumed. For the same reason, bones of relatives are fashioned into necklaces. The most conspicuous of these is the *ibidanghe*, worn generally by women and young girls, which is made from a decorated human jawbone. The aim is to obtain the assistance of the departed relation in fighting illness and bad luck. Direction in hunting, fishing and even quarrelling is supposed to come from the dead kept close to the living. We can trace this belief on the connection between bones and souls to a remote origin: Southern Asia megaliths had, in my opinion, no other cause for offering shelter to spirits and promoting useful relations between the living and the dead. I reached this conclusion after studying the contemporary habits of Travancore mountain and other Indian tribes, particularly the Munda. In Nias we find traces of the same customs as among different peoples of Indonesia and Oceania, who

[1] I discussed this at the two international anthropological congresses of 1952 (Vienna) and 1956 (Philadelphia), and have more to say on the subject in my book about the Onge.

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

now follow them, often ignoring their original significance and symbolism. Among the Onge, spirits are feared but not loved ; the same applies to God Himself.

The Onge bury their dead in trenches, no deeper than three feet. Earth is tightly packed over the graves in order to prevent exhalations. Full details on the subject of Onge burial customs appear in the book that I am writing about the Onge. I slept with the Onge in communal huts that contained fresh graves, without suffering any inconvenience from the smell of the corpses. This recalls the palaeolithic sepulchral caves, where man probably lived as the Onge live in their sepulchral huts today.

There are no latrines near Onge camps – whether permanent or temporary. Excrements are spread carelessly all around, lightly covered with leaves and earth. Flies lay eggs on them. The Onge's only precaution is not to defecate where drinking water might be found after rainfall. With so many opportunities for reproduction, in some places flies form such clouds as to impress the natives themselves. In the north of Little Andaman a creek was named after the flies : Bumila Creek, which means "fly creek". Smells also occasionally inspire geographical names : Tambe-é-bûie, on the north-east coast of Little Andaman, means "the smelly place" in the Onge language. Flies, fleas and ticks are tolerated by the Onge who do not fight them. Fortunately, the hymenoptera collect flies for their nests, not, however, in quantities large enough to compete with the fertility of the species.

2. Clothing and personal care

The only garment worn by Little Andaman women is the *naquinēghē*, a scanty grasslike apron covering the genitals. In addition, during menstrual periods, Onge women wear the *bataghē*, for hygienic purposes. This is a simple cluster of long, soft green leaves cut by the husband for his wife from special trees : Myristica longifolia and others. The only leaves used are those from the end of a stalk, a section of which is left attached to the leaves. The stalk is slipped under the *naquinēghē*, while the long leaves are passed between the thighs to be fastened at the back above the buttocks. It is curious to see Onge women in such myristical attire ! The *bataghē* is ethnographical news, new not only as regards the Andamans : it is an interesting indication of the hygienic measures employed by primitive people, and can probably be traced to prehistoric practices in analogous circumstances. The continental and insular regions nearest to the Andamans have retained no similar custom ; their only practice is the strict isolation of menstruating women. Among the Onge, on the other hand, they are allowed free circulation. Washing is unknown to the Onge : they never wash their bodies intentionally. Brushing through the thick forest and diving into the sea or the river to collect food substitute adequately for washing. The Little Andaman forest is nearly always dripping ; moving among the trees, specially in the early morning, is equivalent to bathing. The contact of wet leaves when walking cleans the Onge's skin, for they go naked ; and as they constantly dive into the sea and rivers, they do not smell. Actually they give an impression of cleanliness – as opposed to many other dark-skinned

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
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common in the Andamans, said by RADCLIFFE-BROWN (p. 273) to be eaten by the Andaman Islanders as a protection against rheumatism, is never killed. For some superstitious reason the Onge are simply horrified at the thought of touching such an enormous flying bat. Among the fruits, those of a plant whose wood has such a revolting smell that it is known, in English, as "stool-tree", are believed to have exceptional protective properties for the human body. The fruits themselves smell even worse than the wood, but this, to the Onge, makes them appetizing rather than disgusting. Concerning honey, and the many sugary fruits of the jungle that are available all the year round, the Onge luckily ignore the simple method of distilling alcohol. No intoxicating drink reaches Little Andaman from the outer world, whereas in Great Andaman alcohol, together with imported syphilis, was one of the main causes of depopulation. No syphilis appears as yet to have reached Little Andaman. This is also confirmed by the research carried out by Dr. HERMANN LEHMANN of London's St. Bartholomew's Hospital, during February 1953 in my Onge camp in Labanare (north-east coast of Little Andaman).

II. Effects on the People's Lives

The islanders die young, specially the men. The majority of them succumb before reaching the age of 20; most of the survivors die between 20 and 40; the rest – with a very few exceptions – before 50. Women, after marriage, follow a similar pattern: the death rate among women, however, is slightly different owing to a less corrosive sexual life. Some women may live to the age of sixty, but both sexes age soon, appearing older than their years when still in their twenties. The short Onge span of life recalls conditions which apparently prevailed among prehistoric and protohistoric men. Palaeolithic man died at an earlier age than modern man. The Onge today, in many respects, behaves as palaeolithic man behaved countless centuries ago. – Infant mortality is high; the first five days of life are the most critical for the Onge, owing, in part, to the hard life led by mothers even during pregnancy, which often causes functional damage to the placenta. Delivery is generally easy and traumatic injury rarely occurs; but premature births are common, and so are malformations and other anomalies. Imperfect infants are quickly eliminated by their parents. As a result, only a small number of children are allowed to grow up, but these appear normal. There are no blind and no deaf-and-dumb people in Little Andaman. I saw only two instances of incipient lameness: in an unmarried boy of about twenty and in a young married woman. Only robust infants can survive.

The Onge, so careful about their food, are completely indifferent to something else that is considered very harmful in continental and insular regions close to the Andamans. There, menstruating women are often segregated and considered harmful to the entire community. Not so in Little Andaman, where the remedies applied in the circumstance are extremely primitive (cf. supra) and could probably be traced to palaeolithic man. I saw nothing

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841 resembling these practices in any other part of the world. Never hitherto
171 described, they should be carefully considered. This would require a lengthy description, for which there is no space here. We may recall that menstruating Onge women are allowed to circulate freely at all times. An interesting detail
[751] is that the *naquinēghē* of first menstruations are worn by relations around their neck as having health-giving properties. The women, as we know, use special
841 soft, long leaves, collected for them by their husbands, as absorbents. They
[824] are the leaves of Myristica longifolia or of Tretanthera lanceofolia both species serving the purpose. They are applied under the *naquinēghē* and drawn back between the legs to be secured above the buttocks. – Sexual intercourse is
[834] forbidden during the menstrual period even by the Onge : illness – a swelling
[753] of the arms or legs – would follow. A curious theory about the reason for menstruation in very young girls is that it is a result of previous sexual contacts
892 stimulated by nose rubbing – the Onge substitute for kissing. They ignore the unhygienic practice of kissing with the lips, and never even kiss their children. Only nose rubbing is practiced. The anatomical structure of the Onge nose, which almost totally lacks nasal bones and is very fleshy, may explain this transference of sensation from nearby regions, i. e. the lips.

844 Births take place in the forest and are surrounded by no hygienic precautions or disinfection as conceived by us. Clay is applied to stem puerperal bleeding, without provoking infection. The only assistant is the pregnant woman's husband, and sometimes one or two old women. Their ability equals that of a herdsman delivering his goat of a kid. No inconvenience arises, in either instance, from lack of precautions. – The tiny, tender and graceful bodies
[751] of Onge infants are smeared with ochre and light-coloured clay for hygienic purposes. This is done immediately after birth, and affords some protection against the teeming legions of mosquitos and ticks that plague Little Andaman. The infant is never washed in water, not even at the very moment of birth. The placenta is buried 30 or 40 cms deep, under the bed of naked branches upon which the mother delivered her baby.

842 An argument that deserves much attention concerns the possible link
143 between lack of hygiene and sterility among the Onge. A vast number of married couples have no offspring, thereby threatening their group with extinction. Consanguinity could be given as a cause : let us examine it. No doubt the Onge are related to each other as a consequence of long interbreeding in their island with no foreigners admitted. These conditions afford an ideal field for studying the effects of endogamy on man. Nowhere in the world, as far as I know, are a people so isolated as in Little Andaman. Inbreeding has existed at 100 % ever since remote times. In other words, the Onge would seem to be the most highly inbred human population known up to the present. Could this fact alone, aside from unhealthy habits, explain their present widespread sterility ? Special
174 studies on the subject should be undertaken, keeping in mind that the Onge have certainly inhabited Little Andaman for thousands of years, on the evidence of my excavations in their kitchen-middens.

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documented the fact in a number of photographs. The purpose, however, is purely hygienic: an unpainted body is, in their opinion, exposed to certain illness. They explained this belief to me by saying that without paint the body becomes "hot". The men who travelled with me far from women were anxious every day to spread clay on face, chest and limbs, just to avoid "heat" or, in other words, fever. I thought of malaria, but they do not suffer from it. Of this I will speak later on.

Rough clay is applied daily, on infant bodies as well as on adults, for health purposes. It is used to cure all kinds of sickness, together with ochre, turtle fat and honey. Honey spread on wounds appears to hasten healing. Identical curative methods are employed in Oceania. They probably existed among the Tasmanians, and are still used in Australia by the aborigines. I found nothing of the kind in Africa, where honey is plentiful. The Onge consider clay, ochre, honey and turtle fat good for external and internal treatment alike – both preventive and curative. Powdered bees' wax of a dark colour is often added. I saw mothers give their children, as a laxative, a number of pills made of similar ingredients. No bigger than common hazelnuts, the pills are red and greasy. In Onge forests I saw some small excavations, a few feet deep, made to extract the medicinal clay from special ground pockets. In its natural form the clay is light coloured, powdery and free of stones. When it is burnt the colour changes, assuming red, yellow, whitish or black shades according to the different qualities used, all believed to possess healing properties and to ensure hygienic colouring of the body. Mixed as described above, clay is used by the Onge in every circumstance from fever to snake or scorpion bite, constipation, breast infection in women, or post-delivery bleeding.

Belief in the medicinal properties of clay is as old as humanity itself. Even among contemporary European peoples, notwithstanding severe criticism, clay is still honoured as health-giving, not, I must say, on wholly foolish grounds. The Onge, who smear their bodies constantly with clay, have the softest, most velvety skin that I ever saw anywhere in the world. Wounds spread with clay mixed with honey and fat leave negligible scars. The laxative and germ-killing action of clay is admitted by physicians in many countries, including Europe. It never causes infection. Geophagism has ancient origins, and we find it practiced by many modern populations. Children of every race and all young wild animals lick clay instinctively to absorb the mineral salts required by a developing organism. The Onge habit of using clay for healing purposes can be set, therefore, in a very wide frame.

Mental and nervous disorders are rare in Little Andaman. Few natives are subject to epilepsy – an important matter for the Onge: they consider such people as possessed by spirits who speak through their mouths, and respectfully question them as oracles. Several Onge chiefs, such as Chief Tchôtă of Tambĕ-ĕ-buiĕ, are apt to go into trances that have all the appearance of epileptic fits. They were elected chiefs on the strength of their epilepsy!

Constant exercise keeps eyesight and hearing extremely sharp in the Onge. I saw no single case of myopia or presbyopia among the natives, nor

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no specialized physicians, the Onge do not understand that payment can be exacted for medical care. This stems from the fact that wages are not considered by those happy people as payment for any kind of work whatsoever, but only as a gift. I realized this when I tried to pay my guides after our extenuating marches through the jungle : in order to avoid offending the natives that we had casually met in the course of our trip, I had to give equal reward to everybody.

The Onge consider some men or women better endowed than others with anti-malefic influence ; but these too neither demand nor receive wages for their services. Evil spirits or evil persons are believed to be principally responsible for illness. A series of superstitions and remarkable habits derive from this belief. The above-mentioned precautions concerning the *naquinĕghĕ* are among them. For identical reasons they carefully hide hair cuttings, but not nail parings, for the simple reason that nails are never cut but worn down by digging for edible roots, fishing, and other rough work. Superstition, as we know, is also the reason for painting the body to prevent fever and other ills.

In the depths of their jungle the Onge appear to practice some kind of witchcraft. On several occasions I noticed the mysterious behaviour of some natives travelling with me. Occasionally a man left our marching column to examine the inside of a huge hollow tree and signal to his friends. They did not prevent me from looking into the hollow, where I saw only a simple structure of short sticks resembling a trap without being one. The Onge do not use traps ; moreover, those structures were far too flimsy to catch anything. Often, two or three men assembled in consultation, rearranged the sticks that had probably been dislodged by the passage of lizards, crabs or other small animals, and walked away silently. I could get no explanation on the matter. Certainly the Onge are sagacious observers of animal and vegetable life and have deep knowledge of their hidden properties. Some trees are probably used for magical purposes, but, I insist, it is impossible as yet to affirm it. The structures in question consisted of four vertical sticks, about 30 cms long, joined at the top by four more sticks of approximately the same length, placed horizontally. The result was a box-like frame, loose and unsecured. The slightest disturbance, such as a light breeze, could destroy the flimsy construction. As far as I could guess they invested those structures with curative properties, but in what manner remains a mystery. I noticed analogous practices among Central African Pygmies and other primitives.

It is very clear that the Onge dread illness and magic spells, for they consider themselves at a loss in fighting such evils. Unhygienic habits are of no importance to them.

Resting is considered favorable to good health. The Onge indulge voluptuously in rest, interrupting it, however, with too frequent sexual excursions. They mainly rest from doing nothing, because 80 % of their time is spent in what, for them, is the most agreeable manner of enjoying life.

In mid-March, when the honey harvest reaches its peak, the Onge guzzle

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CHAPTER IX

ABORIGINAL POPULATION

144 As said earlier, the aboriginal population of the Andamans belong to the negrito group which is spread over the different parts of Southeast Asia e.g. the Semangs and Sakais of Malaya, the Veddas of Ceylon, the Tapiro of New Guinea etc. The pygmies of the Equatorial Africa also show very close resemblance to the negritoes in physical as well as cultural characteristics but the latter are taller, much more dark skinned and also hairy than the former. In spite of the racial affinity with the other negrito groups of Southeast Asia, the Andamanese show a remarkable degree of purity, an outcome of the virtual seclusion and little contact with the other people. But the infiltration of the later settlers have proved a long way to bring about some changes in them. The comparison of the Andamanese with the other negritoes will prove that a good deal of evolution of the Andamanese has been attained by them independently.

Affinity with the other Negritoes of Southeast Asia

● 171 Though the fundamantals of the economy of the Andamanese do not differ appreciably from the Semangs and the other groups, some characteristic features distinguish these people from the others. The Andamanese follows a long series of food privations which is absent among the Semangs and the equipments are also more elaborate than [501] the other negritoes. The outrigger canoes of the Andamanese are more improved, the bows are of complicated S-form and the huts are considerable improvements of the rudimentary temporary camps original to the negritoes. These indicate a definite improvement of the material culture of the Andamanese over the others.

The affinity of the Andamanese with the other negrito groups i.e. the Semangs of the Malaya Peninsula and the Aetas of the Philippines can very well be traced from the study of the equipments of material culture and also from the general habits and the methods of life.

171 As regards the equipments, the bow, the arrow, the mode of erecting 411 shelter and its shape show further improvements in their constuction though the prevalence of the original simple types can be detected in some parts. The original one curvature bow has considerably evolved and has developed into the S-shaped bow in the Andamans though the

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original type can still be found in the Little Andaman. The similarity of the arrows are also striking and this has been rightly observed by Dr. Cipriani,[1] 'Similarity also with the arrows. This consists of a barbed detachable head connected to the shaft by a string. The harpoon arrow like its near relative and probable forefather, the harpoon spears, offers an interesting question in ethnography. Although the Andamans are widely separated from Malaya and Malaya from the Philippines, the three groups of negritoes have harpoon arrows, while such weapons do not seem to be present in other regions of Asia.' The huts of the Andamanese are also the outcome of further improvements over the original negrito shelter found among the other negrito groups.

In the general habits and the modes of living, a good deal of similarity if not identity is maintained with the other negritoes. But changes and modifications have crept up among the different groups in response to the different environments. Some of the original habits have been totally forgotten and some equipments have been further improved upon or in some cases, totally forgotten. The Jarawas, who are believed to have arrived in the Great Andamans from the South had the knowledge of construction and use of the canoes which served as the means of their movement from the south to the north, have totally forgotten both the construction and use of it.

Though the changes brought about among the Andamanese in response to the environment and time is in no way inconsiderable to give them an impress of individuality, little room for doubt is left that they belong to the big family of the negritoes whose remnants are only found to-day scattered over the different parts of southeast Asia.

Origin of the Andamanese

The presence of such a small group of negritoes in the deep solitude of physical separation from the other countries obviously arouses the question as to how and wherefrom they came. The attributes of the Andamanese, prove very well their affinity with the negrito groups. Much to the curiosity of the observers, the tribal people of the Nicobar Islands do not show any affinity with the Andamanese culturally or materially and such contrasts are important aspects of anthropological study. However, the distribution of the negrito group in these isolated islands have been explained by some as the passage of the people from the Lower reaches of Burma and it is accepted with greater unanimity be-

1 Cipriani, L—On the origin of the Andamanese, Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Census of India, 1961.

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and the 'peppercorn' hair (disposed in tufts with bare areas) do indeed recall the Bushmen, but superficial resemblances are not enough to classify the two peoples as at all closely related. There is an important difference between the two in the structure and cross-section of the hair. Hairs from the Onges which were examined in Calcutta were remarkably uniform, indicating the racial purity of the people, unlike those of the Arioto, which showed considerable variation in cross-section, from the almost circular straight hair of the Mongoloid type, to the flattened, almost remiform hair of the original Negritos.

Different, too, is the shape of the head; I have never seen in the Negritos the typical Bushmen head, with the prominent occiput, and I saw no Andamanese with the pseudo-mongoloid appearance of the eyes which occurs in Bushmen.

The hands and feet are also different. Among the Kung women of the northern Kalahari in particular I saw delicate hands with very long metacarpals and a very small thumb, the elongated metacarpals displacing the thumb towards the wrist. None of the Negritos appear to have anything resembling this; their hands are always rather broad. Moreover, the feet of the male Onges are nearly always flat while those of the women tend to turn in, recalling the small peoples of Indonesia and New Guinea, but not the Bushmen.

An interesting though not congenital abnormality in the Andamanese results from the carrying of weights slung from the head from too early an age. Loads are always carried on their backs by a rope made of bark, the weight being taken on the forehead. The rope presses on the head in the region of the bregma and creates the so-called bregmatic furrow. This is more marked in females, as the women normally do most of the carrying. Even the children travel on their parents' backs, hanging like parcels, until the age of five or six when they are old enough to follow the group on their own.

The Abor, a mongoloid people of small stature in the mountains of North-West Assam, carry loads in the same way, but with no resulting head furrow. The Andamanese have softer cranial bones, and the result of load-bearing is therefore clearly visible. As it occurs in both sexes, it is often hard if not impossible to determine sex from skulls if the pelvis is absent. The long bones are not of

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Western standards taciturn or sly, and the Negro peoples, who frequently manifest complete abandonment in their amusement. Obscenities appear to be an unfailing source of amusement to the Onges, who indulge in them at every opportunity, even with strangers, and the obscene dances of the womenfolk are a continual source of pleasure. The exchange of obscenities is, indeed, a sign of friendship, and I found that vulgarity was invariably immensely successful in provoking hilarity; any subsequent negotiations were always peaceable and satisfactory.

An extension of this vulgarity is an infantile vanity, not without sexual significance. The care with which their bodies are painted nearly every day is one aspect of this vanity; the more a wife loves her husband the more magnificent the designs she executes on him. The paintings on their bodies reach a peak every two or three days, as the Onges fear illness and death if they are not newly daubed, and the face at least must be continually painted, with at least smears on the chest, arms and legs. A man returning from an exceptionally successful hunting trip is met by his wife with a specially unusual and elaborate design, which she carries out with great devotion. During each of my visits to the island the Onges would rush up to show me their embellishments as soon as they were finished, and took a delight in standing in front of my camera, even though they had no idea what it was for.

It is curious that unlike most primitive peoples, the Onges do not practise tattooing, which is one of the simplest ways, if not *the* simplest, in which such peoples satisfy their craving for physical admiration. The other Andamanese do, puncturing the skin with tiny slivers of obsidian or quartz, but the Onges paint with ochre instead. They love, too, to weave garlands of fruit, flowers and leaves from the forest, returning to the camp laden with them, men and women alike, delighted with their own beauty. This divergence of customs in peoples essentially of the same stock, but separated for long periods of time into endogamous isolates, is very remarkable.

An intense preoccupation with sexual attraction and activity has led to the prevalence of aberration. All the Onges have homosexual tendencies. I became aware of this during my first visit to Little Andaman on one of my longer expeditions, when I had taken only men with me, and on subsequent occasions I therefore allowed the men to bring their wives. The effect of long periods of absence on

twining up into the trees, and the shorter-stemmed yams, are never disturbed. The Onges merely dig down, at a respectful distance from the plant, certain of finding what they want. On no account must there be any signs of the theft for the spirit to see, so they quietly take off roots or tubers some way from the main stem and leave the rest, patting the earth down afterwards and covering the place with leaves. The guardian spirit, not, apparently, all-seeing, notices nothing, as the plant continues to flourish, improved by the root pruning. Everyone, guardian spirit and Onges alike, is happy.

This unconscious preservation may well be the result of a decree, in some remote past, by an Onge seer who realized the danger of killing off the entire plants and invented the guardian spirits as a deterrent. The Negritos still make similar use of roots and tubers; Skeet and Blagden fifty years ago referred to the Semang eating poisonous wild yams, having removed the toxic substances.[1]

It is interesting that both in the past and even today a number of peoples at a very early stage of cultural development have progressed from the gathering of the wild yams of South-East Asia to the first signs of cultivation and agriculture. It is possible that they were the first plants ever to be cultivated by primitive Man, the Negritos with their digging sticks delving then as they do now; the genus is certainly a very ancient one, and some species, such as *Dioscorea alata*, may have spread from Asia to Africa and Oceania, and even to America, with the beginning of cultivation. But this is a stage of development which the peoples of the Andaman never reached.

The digging stick, the only implement the Onges have with which to get at the roots and tubers, has in recent times been affected, though to a very limited extent by the spread of iron. Only a few individuals possess a primitive iron tool, half a metre long, cylindrical in shape and usually not more than one and a half centimetres in diameter and flattened into a form of blade at one end. The vast majority still have only the age-old stick made of hard wood, hardly recognizable as a tool and crudely fashioned into a point at one end. This tool, so primitive that it can easily be mistaken for an odd

[1] It is interesting that the American Aborigines, especially in Brazil, do the same with manioc, but I saw nothing of this nature in the Andamans.

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piece of wood, has definite uses, and none of the nomadic forest peoples anywhere in the world are without it. Everywhere it is found it is effective in filling huge baskets with food – baskets equally simply and equally quickly made. I have already described (see p. 93) the baskets made by the Onges for purely temporary use on their hunting expeditions. In the communal huts, however, the making of real baskets involves hours of careful plaiting, working the supple fibres from the strong bark of selected rushes, and expert finishing. These baskets are an invariable and prized part of every family's inheritance and are preserved for as long as possible. Nowhere in the collection of basketry from Great Andaman are there baskets with more craftsmanship than the permanent ones of the Onges.[1] All the baskets are the shape of half an egg. There is little variation in size, all being about forty centimetres in diameter at the top, and about forty-five centimetres deep, unlike the temporary carriers, which vary considerably in size, according to whether they are to be carried by men, women, or even children, and what is to be carried.

At the opposite extreme from the underground harvest of roots, men and women alike use long thin hooked poles to hook down fruit from the trees, climbing up into the trees when necessary to strip the highest branches and then hiding the poles in the forest until they are next required (no attempt is ever made to carry them about). When the tree is not too large, it is ruthlessly chopped down and stripped as it lies on the ground. I was horrified in the first fortnight of April to see this happen to trees which the Onges call *dangbecciò*, which bear blackish-red fruit about the size of a pigeon's egg. The attraction is the flavour of the pulp, but there is little of it, surrounding a large nut. To get at the pulp a thick, hard case has to be cracked, but to the formidable Onge teeth this is no problem and the case cracks comparatively easily. The nut itself is not edible; the honey-coloured pulp is sweetish, but there is so little that it takes ten fruits to provide ten grams of it. The fruits hang in bunches at the end of branches covered with leaves rather like a chestnut. As the wood is very soft, the Onges usually hack the trees down; large ones may merely have their branches lopped

[1] Editor's note: The author indicated in manuscript at this point his intention of giving a full description of the way in which these are made, but unfortunately died before he was able to do so.

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night. Everything else stops. *Bulondanghe* are food enough, and even honey is left for the future; there will be larvae, and bees, and nests to come. Life is good!

Later come the large, heavy *Pandanus* (*Mane* to the Onges) but they are far less important. The whole fruit has hardly any smell, but immediately it is open it smells rather like a pineapple. The separate segments, actually carpals, each in its own skin, pineapple-coloured on the outside shading to a pale yellow, can be picked off one by one. Each carpal is rather like a pyramid, with the top towards the centre of the fruit, the base towards the outside, wrinkled and divided into cellules each containing an ovule. The edible part of the fruit is very small. In the Nicobars, where the huge cultivated variety can weigh anything up to two kilos, the women spend hours passing a string through and through the heavy sphere of orange pulp to comb out the short bristly fibres which damage the stomach. The Onges are not interested in such niceties! The smaller wild fruit is merely broken into pieces, ready for chewing. The result of all the chewing is hardly worth the effort; there is taste, and there is smell, but the food value is very small indeed, and even the Onges seem to realize it.

Much better are the *giogbene*, which ripen in February, and the *ghine* in mid-March. The *giogbene* are soft, red fruit, the size of a cherry but rather less rounded, hanging in bunches from the trunk and the larger branches of the tree. The green seed sprouts out of the end of the fruit, like a large bean, but is not eaten; the Onges cut it off, and eat only the pulpy fruit, raw. They love to make necklaces, twining the fruits with slender fibres into long garlands, even making some for me when I was with them, and return to the camp every night with long ropes hanging round their necks and from their arms.

Ghine are very different. From the outside they look like small medlars, covered with a leathery skin which is easy to crack off with one's teeth. The fruit itself has three segments, and is rather gelatinous, a little sour, but quite edible. The Indians with me liked them very much and ate so many that they developed severe indigestion – unlike the Onges, who ate far more with no ill effects.

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rule the multiplication and growth of the various animals and plants useful to Man.

The Onges do not love Eiuga, or any of the other spirits. They merely fear them, and seek to evade their anger by various expedients. It is curious that they never hesitate to try and deceive the spirits and think themselves very clever when they manage to steal roots or tubers from the ground. Nor do they revere the spirits of their ancestors; these are to be feared and propitiated by preservation of their bones. By definition none of the spirits, since they can be deceived by simple tricks, can be all-powerful, but this conclusion, simple though it is, is still beyond the Onges' powers of reasoning.

The Onges' fear of the dead is instanced by their carrying round their necks the *ibidanghe*, or necklet of human jaws, as a propitiation. The wearing of the bones prevents the spirit from going away (by analogy the bones of dead enemies are burned to force the spirit, clearly a hostile one, to leave the place). The custom of burial within the communal hut follows the same logic – the spirits of the dead are kept near their bones and hence near their relatives, to help them in the daily round of hunting, fishing and gathering food.[1]

Unlike most of the other peoples whose burial customs are even today based on their underlying principles, the Onges have not progressed beyond the stage of relating the dead directly to the demands of daily life; they have no 'practices' of any kind, no concept at all of holy places, prayers or images. Even the very names of the dead are soon forgotten. Their fears, however, are none the less very real. They do not like to speak of Eiuga or even of the lesser spirits, for fear of attracting their attention.

The Onges have no stories or explanatory legends, like those reported by Brown for Great Andaman. They have only short epics, if such they may be called, recalling extraordinary events in

[1] This belief is of very remote origin, and can be traced back at least to the megaliths of southern Asia, like the splendid ones which I was able to photograph, among others, in the mountains of Travancore. Here again the object was to prevent the dead from leaving their relatives. Similar ideas are found today in India among several tribes, notably the Munda, or Nias, and among various peoples of Indonesia, and even Oceania. The rituals are probably followed today without any understanding of their meaning or symbolism; the details vary from place to place, but the underlying principle, the original fear, remains the same everywhere.

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were approaching an Onge camp. Everywhere they go they are accompanied by flies of all sizes, and in Little Andaman the swarms are so bad that the first stranger to land called a river after them, Bumila Creek, or fly river. Their flies betray the Onges long before the barking of their dogs – no human voice ever betrays their silent presence.

On Little Andaman today the Onges' tacit divisions of territory are of little importance, so heavy has been the fall in population, but they still keep out of areas belonging to other 'huts', even if the huts themselves have been abandoned. I never saw any disputes over territory, or the ownership of the area in which a pig was caught (and hence ownership of the pig). The Onges who accompanied me, possibly encouraged by the prestige value of a European with them, hunted wherever we went without anyone raising any protests. Nevertheless, I always took the precaution of giving anything I or my Indians took to the Onges of the nearest hut, invariably much to their delight.

Contrary to established opinion, communal huts on Little Andaman are not found only along the coasts; the majority, and certainly the best constructed, are in the interior. Togalanghe is one, and there are a number of permanently abandoned temporary camps near it.

Both the permanent and temporary huts or shelters of the Andamans resemble those of the Semang. The latter are extremely simple, especially in the dry season; there are no walls and only a very sloping roof of leaves, high at the front and very low at the back, the beds being put so that the feet face the low part of the roof. With the Semang and Aeta the beds may be made of bamboo; this is never the case in the Andamans, as there are no large bamboos in the archipelago (Brown was wrong in this respect. The few slender bamboos on Little Andaman are only usable for making drying racks, which are found only round the hut at Beniabol in the south. As the people were away when I went there, and the site was consequently completely deserted, I was unable to establish visually what they dried, but traces of fish, particularly pilchards, were indication enough.)

These temporary shelters are put up extremely quickly. Two poles less than two metres long for the front, and two more, thirty to forty centimetres long, for the back, are fixed firmly into the

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providing not too much effort is required. The Semang and Aeta dig water-holes, and several authors have regarded the Andamanese as differing from them in this respect, but I am able to confirm that they can and do dig water-holes. I first saw them do so in 1951, and in 1952 and again in 1953, near Toqué-è-bûie, I was able to enlarge one. Originally it yielded very little water, and very dirty, as the Onges never bother to go further down than they must – a handful of water is enough. After I had enlarged the well it yielded over half a cubic metre an hour, and I had to build a fence round it to prevent the dogs wallowing in it. I gave the Onges buckets, rope, pick-axes and spades so they could get at clean water, although in view of their natural indolence I rather doubted whether they would be any use. In fact, they used the metal parts for arrow heads and went on as before, drinking out of foul pools covered in rotting vegetation and refuse. It is easy to have clear water on Little Andaman, naturally filtered over the coral formations and never more than two or three metres down, but the effort is too much for the Onges! Usually they drink like animals, lying flat on their stomachs with their lips to the water; some will fold a large leaf into a crude cup, however, and occasionally a fastidious individual will use a *Nautilus* shell.

The water-hole at Toqué-è-bûie alone, if properly maintained, would be able to supply enough water every day for at least five hundred people. The continual falling in of the sides, inevitable in a sandy area, could be permanently prevented by cementing them.

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The Onges are the most numerous of the three peoples surviving in the Andamans. Vigorous and apparently full of promise for the future they may well offer a suitable field for the application of eugenic measures designed to increase their numbers; this would be impossible with the Jarawas owing to their hostility towards outsiders, and the few remaining Arioto are nearly all of impure stock. If their confidence could be gained, it might be possible to encourage inter-marriage between the various groups, in the hope that fertility would increase and the ultimate total extinction of Onges, Jarawas and Arioto, would be prevented.

In the Andamanese, this physiological decline has been accompanied by cultural decadence, as my digs in the kitchen-middens all over the archipelago showed. The ancient pottery which came to light is proof enough; when one compares it with recent work the latter is indicative of secondary and not original primitiveness. The successive strata in the deposits show a gradual decline from earthenware clearly made from a very refined mix to crude ware with vegetable impurities and bits of stone left in the clay. The pots dating from ancient times were clearly well fired and the quality of the clay allowed them to have thin but nevertheless very strong walls. In the present-day ware, on the other hand, the wall has to be thick because of the coarseness of the clay, making the pots both heavy and easily broken. Moreover, firing is limited to drying the pots in the sun, and the clay is in fact only hardened when the pot is used for cooking.

Ignorance of fire-making in the Andamans may also stem from this cultural regression, as one of the effects of physiological and psychological decadence. Given the absence of magico-religious beliefs among the Andamanese, ignorance of fire-making cannot be attributed to any ritual taboo or veto. On the other hand, it is in sharp contrast to the possession of elements of cultural advance such as the bow, with highly developed arrows, the harpoon with its detachable point, and the outrigger canoe.

Few races are known, even in far distant times, which never had fire. *Sinanthropus* and nearly every fossil Man after him had fire, even if he was unable to create it and could only preserve it once received from some natural combustion. The Onges, while retaining a number of ethnic characteristics of the Palaeolithic era, have

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remains belonged to species still extant. Some chronological assistance was given, however, by four different stratifications due to evident changes in the level of the adjacent marshes, resulting not from any general marine phenomena, but from numerous land movements. On these occasions the cliffs sank, the sea flowed inland and corals flourished, later to be buried by the black ooze and mud of the mangrove swamps.

The maximum rise in the sea-level during the growth of the midden was a little over three metres, and affected a wide area. The date could be established by a full geological study of the archipelago as a whole, but it is clear that although this and similar occurrences had direct stratigraphic effects on the middens, the results were manifest only over very long periods of time.

Refuse from introductions of European origin, such as pipes, glass bottles, shot pellets, pieces of iron, etc., appear in the top level, only fifteen centimetres thick and dating back about a hundred years. There were no dog bones either here or anywhere else on Little or Great Andaman. Recently introduced, the dog clearly caused an increase in the amount of pig remains, and a parallel reduction in shell refuse. Below the fifteen centimetres level, iron, imported pipes and glass fragments disappear, and the crab-claw pipes, still used today by the Onges, begin to emerge. The smoking habit must, as I have said, date from very ancient times, as traces of these claw pipes appear in the lowest strata, in contact with virgin soil.[1]

The actual consistency of the layers, which vary considerably, can tell us much. At Golpahar, we reached a depth of about four metres from the top of the midden through refuse mixed with only a little loose earth, very easy to penetrate. Bones, shells and other objects emerged clean, as if only recently rejected. The situation altered suddenly about one metre from the bottom, when the strata became hard and cemented with a mixture of ashes and earth. In these layers the shells were calcified by exposure to fire, and so fragile that they could only be recovered in broken pieces.

[1] It is obvious that smoking is a very ancient vice; leaves of the wild hemp are still smoked in Africa as they were long before the discovery of tobacco and claw pipes like those of the Onges are found in Eastern New Guinea, especially on the south coast, and as far as the Torres Straits and the Melville Straits. In Australia these pipes appear only in a few coastal areas in the east and north, including the Gulf of Carpentaria, and they are not found in the rest of Australia or in Polynesia.

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172 It is clear from this that when they first arrived in the Andamans, the Negritos had no pottery; there are no signs of it at all in the lowest levels. Before they acquired the use of earthenware, perhaps for centuries, they baked their shellfish in ashes, so that the shells became calcified; but as time went on they came to boil them, as the islanders still do today. There is a clear distinction between the ashy, fragile, almost fossilized appearance of the former, and the cleaner solidity of the latter.

172 178 323 In the lowest level in which it appears, the pottery shows signs of careful working of the clay and good firing, degenerating towards more recent times. The uppermost layers reveal the crudest ware, the clay being impure, carelessly mixed, with bits of stone in it and hardly fired at all; it appears to have been merely dried by exposure to the sun and hardened in the course of normal use, as the Onges do today. The resulting pots break easily, despite their thickness, in contrast to the thinner, but much stronger, walls of earlier pottery. They were built up by the coil technique, exactly as they are made on Chowra, the one island in the Nicobars which specializes in pottery.

172 171 323 On Great Nicobar, among the Shom-Pen, these exists also another, cruder type of pottery which is made by a very primitive method. A basket is covered with clay, and hardened in the fire without being properly fired; fragments of this type of pottery retain the marks of the basket inside. The kitchen-middens of the Andamans contain no traces of any primitive stage of this kind; instead, a somewhat refined form of earthenware appears suddenly. There are traces of ornamentation, rows of small lines, usually roughly parallel. No such ornamentation appears on the crude ware of more recent date, however.

171 323 Andamanese pots have always been made with a pointed base which prevents their standing upright, so that they have to be carried in baskets, exactly like those of the Shom-Pen, who make their pots in complete ignorance of the Andamanese and Chowra pottery.

Pottery did not form part of the culture of the Negritos of ancient times. Neither the Semang of Malacca nor the Aetà of the Philippines, their last remnants, nor the Andamanese, had any. The custom of hollowing out logs for use as vessels, and the continuing use of the earth oven, doubtless made the absence of any pottery no hardship.

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If we may deduce from the evidence of the middens, pottery arrived in the Andamans at the same time as the pig, bones of which appear only in the upper levels; but we know nothing of the people responsible for the introduction of either. It is, however, certain that both arrived in Great Andaman and Little Andaman together.

There are indications that Little Andaman was the first to feel the benefit of pottery, possibly introduced by a light-skinned people. There are, as I have said, significant variations of skin colour and stature among the Onges; some have markedly lighter skins than the other islanders, and one would assume that this feature entered Little Andaman from the Nicobars with the unknown people who brought with them pottery and the pig. The people as an entity have disappeared as a result of inter-marriage with the indigenous population, while pigs reverted to the wild state and flourished, even spreading from one island to another by swimming (I can vouch for this, having seen them do it).[1]

The indications are that there were migrations from Little Andaman to Great Andaman long before those from which the Jarawas derive. In certain respects they resemble the Onges, whereas the surviving Arioto appear to represent a purer stock. The Onges seem to have acquired foreign blood in relatively recent times, perhaps when pigs and pottery appeared, when the kitchen-middens of Great Andaman were already being built up by the Arioto, but before the migration northwards by which the Jarawas reached their present home. Much more intensive investigation of the middens will, however, be needed before these hypotheses can be confirmed.

At Golpahar there were within the midden five graves containing human bones, not in anatomical position, and clearly filled in with fresh earth. I was surprised to find only the long bones, skulls and jawbones; the remaining bones could not be found. This may be explained by the custom among the Arioto (still prevailing

[1] One thing is puzzling: the three remaining groups of primitive Negritos in Malacca and the Philippines have the arrow harpoon with a detachable head. This is particularly valuable in the forests against the pigs, which cannot escape into the undergrowth once they have been hit. But it is difficult to see how or why the arrow harpoon reached the Andamans, where there were at that time no large mammals. It seems necessary to postulate the former spread of the weapon with the Negritos over a very wide area and its use against a much wider range of animals.

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been cooked in the same way; the bones are never charred, but always have the appearance of being cooked in an earth oven. The direct roasting of large game over the fire, postulated by some authorities, including Brown, was never practised; the islanders preferred to go on as they had done since time immemorial, because it was more efficient – witness the traces of the earth oven which are to be found all over the world, including Europe. In Polynesia and Micronesia, and among the pygmies of Asia and Africa, it was widely used; variations when they arose did so as the result of local circumstances, like that of throwing water on the fire instead of using fleshy leaves, when there were none in the area. But the basic principle remained the same everywhere, and the use of the earth oven coincides with the geographical distribution of hunting, gathering and burial customs similar to those found in the Andamans.

In April 1954 I excavated the midden at Tambe-e-buiè on Little Andaman, abandoned after the earth tremors of 1951, to investigate the position of the beds. The custom of burying the dead underneath their beds made it possible to trace the latter by the human remains below them, arranged in a circle round the periphery. The Onges themselves helped in the work, sometimes even trying to recognize the remains as they came to light.[1] There were clear signs of reburial. The body is buried immediately after death at least one metre deep; whereas after exhumation, cleaning and colouring, it is never re-interred more than thirty centimetres below the floor of the hut. When another death makes it necessary for a new grave to be dug under the bed, the piles of bones from the second are disturbed, so that in time a form of ossuary develops. In this it is not possible to identify the various remains of individuals unless some change in the position of the hut, even by a few metres, preserves the bones from disturbance by fresh graves. Traces of the graves always remain, however, as they are invariably filled with fresh earth.

We have already seen that on Little Andaman the introduction of the dog reduced the consumption of shellfish (and hence the rate

[1] The material recovered is now in the Anthropological Museum of the Andamans and Nicobars, which I helped to establish at Port Blair. The museum was inaugurated on 6 June 1955 in the presence of the Governor, Mr A. K. Ghosh and the chief Indian officials of the town.

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often extremely vicious but good hunters. The dogs often roam the forests in packs, hunting and devouring young pigs. The Onges will do nothing about it unless someone forces them to, but if this pack hunting is not stopped the pig will become extinct in ten or twenty years and in 1954 I tried myself (in vain) to draw the attention of the authorities to the situation.

The dog appears in even the most ancient of cultures in Australia, but did not spread to Tasmania, despite the geographical proximity. It arrived on Great Andaman with the establishment of the Indian penal colony and it is thus the Indian pariah which ultimately populated the whole archipelago. A despised outcast in India, the pariah became in the Andamans of enormous value, reverting to its ancient hunting instincts. Burmese police officials taught the islanders how to use the animal for hunting and within a few years it had revolutionized their methods. It led the islanders in fact, to comparative indolence; the dog worked for them, supplying with far less effort as much game as they used to catch in their long, weary and not always successful expeditions. Dogs meant invariable and abundant success in the hunt, and it is hardly surprising that the Andamanese came to develop a somewhat unbalanced affection for them.

On Little Andaman the dogs, with abundant food supplies always easily available, became physically far superior to their ancestors in India; unlike the pariahs they were well muscled, with good skins and coats, although most of them bear the marks of old and recent gashes by boar tusks.

On Great Andaman the dogs voluntarily catch and kill fallow deer. These, like the dogs, have increased to the extent of becoming a pest. The Arioto and Jarawas will not eat them for superstitious reasons, and so they have bred like wildfire, spreading to all the islands as far as Rutland. They swim well, but only with land in sight, and the greater distances involved have so far prevented them from spreading to Little Andaman.

Here the dogs have only one main prey – the pigs. Unlike the deer with their slender legs they cannot outdistance the dogs, and their only defence is to hide under the buttresses of the tree-trunks. The pig rushes underneath the tree, and faces the dogs like a stag at bay. There is no escape, only a few more terrible minutes of life. The pig fights the dogs off desperately, the males inflicting serious

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they may be, and the strays of the Andaman forests howl unceasingly. Even in the Onge encampments the dogs howl enough to wake their sleeping masters; the only way to stop the noise is for the Onges to forestall it by taking their dogs into the family bed, fleas and all. There ensues silence, warmth and more fleas!

Hunting weapons of the Andamanese, the Semang and the Aetà were originally made by all three peoples in a similar way, common to all the Negritos. None have any defensive weapons as such; their bows and arrows, never feathered, serve as arms as well as for hunting and fishing. Shields are unknown and spears, rare in the Andamans and among the Semang, are apparently no longer in use among the Aetà; where they exist they are usually mainly for hunting. All three peoples, however, have the arrow harpoon.[1]

Their bows are all clearly derived from the same source. In the Andamans, only the Onges and Jarawas have remained true to the original form, local variations arising at a later date, and they afford additional evidence in favour of Little Andaman being the original springboard from which the Negritos entered Great Andaman.

All the Negritos make their bows from one piece of wood stripped longitudinally from the living trunks of large trees such as *Mimusops littoralis* or *Pterocarpus dalbergoides*. After they have been left to season the strips are patiently fashioned into the required shape; for this the Onges use the shells of *Cyrena* (the freshwater species, which are tougher). The bows are straight, thicker in the middle and gradually tapering towards the ends, and are usually 1·6 metres long, although there are exceptions. The cross section is the same throughout the length of the bow, varying from three or four centimetres diameter at the centre to two and a half centimetres at the horns. The inner surface is so slightly curved as to be almost flat, while the back is markedly convex. The blunt horns end in a 'shoulder and neck' stop to take the string, the neck projecting about one and a half centimetres beyond the shoulders – enough to hold the bowstring. The shoulder is formed by strips of *Ficus* bark wound round the bow, or the yellow fibres of *Dendrobium*; one shoulder is invariably larger than the other. The string itself, made from long thin strips of *Ficus* bark twisted together, has a very narrow loop on one end and a larger one at the other;

[1] See p. 86.

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becomes more complex; the upper horn is more pointed than the lower, and there is a difference between the upper and lower halves of the bow, as it is necessary to prevent the loops of the strings slipping on the bow. The bow string is made not from *Ficus* bark, as in the Onge bow, but from thin *Anadendron* fibres, twisted together and waxed with beeswax; it has the usual loop at each end, and the bow is strung with the help of the foot as in the simpler version. When strung, this type of bow becomes S-shaped as a result of the variations in elasticity arising from the spear-shape of the two halves, but when drawn it assumes the normal shape. The fact that it is easier to draw an S-bow than a single-curve one, without any loss of propulsive force, is an interesting mechanical point.

The bows are only strung when required for use, and in the normal way neither they nor the arrows are ever seen by outsiders; they disappear up into the roof of the communal hut, or into the bushes round the temporary camps. Even with friendly Onges I had to ask specifically to see them, or surprise their owners out hunting.

The external influences to which the Semang and Aetà have been subjected have been strong enough to make them to a large extent forget their original form of bow, which has however survived alongside a large number of cultural inovations. The differences, for example, between the upper and lower extremities of both bow and string have persisted, and the shoulder-and-neck stop (although this is now made by notching the bow-stave deeply) so that we may reasonably assume that a close study of the Onge bow will give us the essential characteristic of a very ancient form of the weapon. The greatest modification to the original form is the one which has been made on North Andaman, and in an attempt to improve the effect of separate curving of the two sections selected trees are deliberately trained for the purpose, the cut wood being seasoned slowly over heat and smoke, paying particular care to the parts which will take the greatest strain. As a result the 'give' in the bow is markedly increased. But even here no fundamental alteration has been made in the design of the weapon.

The Onge bow, therefore, represents the forerunner of the somewhat more highly evolved type (now dying out with their owners) on Great Andaman, and adds further support to the evidence for

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screams of a wild boar can be heard for hundreds of metres, drawing the hunters in from all sides, eager to take it alive. If it proves to be a large male, whose tusks can inflict appalling injuries, the hunters kill it at once with a spear or with a third type of arrow which has a long fixed head. This type of arrow, which does not differ greatly from those found in other parts of the world, is still used by some of the Andamanese against human enemies.

The shaft of the arrow harpoon is made preferably from *Tetranthera lancifolia*, very common all over the archipelago. The wood for the shafts has to be straight, very slender at one end, where a notch is cut half a centimetre deep to take the cord, and a little thicker at the other, which is hollowed out for about one centimetre to take the head of the weapon. Splitting of the wood at the ends is, as usual, prevented by binding the shaft with *gnetum* fibres, twisted into thread and waxed with beeswax.

The efficiency of the harpoon depends on the double-strand cord, extremely strong, made from *Hibiscus* fibres. One end is fixed on to the shaft, five centimetres from the point at which the foreshaft enters it, and the other to the foreshaft, two centimetres from the base, with a thirty-two centimetre loop of cord between the two fixings.

The harpoon blade, now made of iron, is eleven centimetres long and spear-shaped, ending in a series of barbs. The haft of the blade is bound tightly on to the short foreshaft, also eleven centimetres long, which is scraped thin at the end so that the haft can be bound on smoothly. The complete weapon mounted for use is about eighty-eight centimetres long overall in the Onges and Jarawas, and slightly shorter, about sixty-five centimetres, in the Arioto.

To prepare the harpoon for use the slack of the cord is wound firmly round the shaft, and the foreshaft with the blade attached is forced in. As the harpoon strikes, the shaft becomes detached and the victim, firmly held by the barbed arrow head, drags it along on the end of the cord until it catches in the undergrowth and holds the animal fast.

There is little difference between the arrow harpoons of Little Andaman and Great Andaman, and what difference there is affects only the dimensions, the type of cord, and the form of the barbs. The basic principle remains the same wherever it is found; all the Negritos, including the Semang and Aetà still use it, although these

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two have added feathers, and poisoned tips, in imitation of neighbouring peoples.

For the capture of large fish and animals such as turtles, dolphins and dugong, the Onges and Arioto use not the arrow harpoon but the spear harpoon. Brown saw none of these among the Onges he studied in Rutland, and consequently assumed its absence on Little Andaman. The Onges carry as little as possible on their sea voyages for the sake of speed, and would not therefore take spear harpoons (used only for marine hunting) with them on trips to Rutland, which they visit only for the purpose of hunting pigs and not to fish, or to hunt marine animals. They certainly have, and use, spear harpoons even today; I myself have been with the Onges and seen their harpoons used from the canoes. I had ample opportunity to admire both the effectiveness of the weapons and the accuracy of the throwers.

The greater structural and operational simplicity of the spear harpoon, in comparison with the arrow harpoon, leads one to suppose it the older of the two. Its cord is made of tough *Hibiscus* fibres, and with the aid of these and a straight shaft about six metres long and little over four centimetres in diameter, even the humblest of nails, seven centimetres long and three millimetres in diameter, can become the point of a spear harpoon. It is fixed into the shaft (usually of mangrove wood) which is hollowed out at the thinner end to take it, and with a cord up to a hundred metres long or more attached to the nail two centimetres from the head, the spear harpoon is ready for use – shaft, point and cord.

When the harpoon is to be used for turtles, no barbs are needed, as the point is driven so firmly into the shell that blocks of wood have to be carried in the canoes to knock it out for re-use.

The harpoon throwers stand ready on the platform jutting out fore and aft of the canoes (see p. 122), the free end of the cord is tied to one of the booms to prevent it being jerked out of the canoe as the victim tries to escape, and the slack is coiled in the bottom of the canoe. The thrower holds the cord against the harpoon as he waits for the right moment and then throws. As the harpoon strikes, the point detaches from the shaft, which floats on the water till picked up – often to be used as a punt-pole in the shallow waters of the coral reefs as the canoe follows the victim, now held firmly on the end of the cord.

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Even the unique dances enjoyed by the Onges are to be seen among the Jarawas, with the characteristic marking of the rhythm by slapping the calves against the buttocks. This does not seem to have been a feature of the Arioto dances, in which the rhythm was by the *pukuta yemnga*, a kind of convex shield made of the very hard and aromatic red wood (*Pterocarpus dalbergoides*) which the termites never seem to attack. I was able to obtain one of these shields, the last that the twenty-three surviving Arioto possessed and the only musical instrument in the islands. It is played by one man with his feet, while the dancers, male and female, form lines on each side of him a short distance away. Before use the convex face is decorated with lines of white ochre and chains of tusk shells are hung from a hole at the end opposite to the one on which the player's feet beat; from the same hole runs a cord, which he holds in his hand to prevent the instrument moving away from him as he beats. The players change from time to time as the dancers shuffle on and on for hours in the light of the resin torches. But apart from the instrument itself, the rhythmic hand-clapping and the dancers singing in unison are the same throughout the Andamans.

The women clap their hands in rhythm, and then slap one thigh with the open palm of one hand, the other hand clasping the wrist, singing all the time. The men dance in Indian file, beating the ground first with the right heel, then with the left, the toes barely raised from the ground, moving a short way forward each time. As they dance they lean forward, then with hands clasped and their fingers interlaced. There are variations, but the basic step is always the same.

One difference between the Onges and the Jarawas is that in the latter both sexes are naked, while the Onge women have in recent times adopted the *naquineghe* or apron. Complete nudity was a characteristic of all the Negritos, including the Semang and Aetà, and the Jarawa migrations probably took place before the introduction of the *naquineghe*.

The present inability of the three peoples to understand each other is more a question of pronunciation than of difference in actual words. To examine the question fully it would be necessary to collect a large number of words and analyse their affinity; meanwhile we know that despite their inability to understand each other there is a close resemblance between the language of the Jarawas and Sentinellese and that of the Onges. Strict isolation can lead to

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completely lost the art of building them, probably by the same mechanism as the Jarawas, that is as a result of isolation in forest areas. The Semang sometimes prepare hasty bamboo rafts when they want to cross a river, however, and there do appear to be a few canoes among groups of Aetà living along the coasts. Facility of contact with neighbouring areas has brought about modification in both peoples, especially in the course of the last hundred years, whereas the complete isolation of the Andamans cannot be overstressed.

These later contacts, however, have not yet destroyed the ancient physical and cultural habits of the Semang and Aetà. The food of those who have remained nomadic in the forest still consists of roots, fruit, and whatever they can get by hunting and fishing. Some have certainly recently tended to settle, and have adopted a rude form of agriculture, but the rest have remained as primitive as the peoples of the Andamans, using digging sticks to get at the edible roots, and hooked sticks to get at the fruits on the trees. They do have axes with blades (now made of iron) which can split open tree-trunks to get at the honey inside or, when hafted on the end of a stick, to hollow out trunks to make vessels and clean off the exterior. But again, their bows and arrows, very similar to the ancient pattern, still remain their chief means of acquiring food.

The Negritos of Malacca and the Philippines make baskets, some of which are clearly copied from neighbouring peoples, while others correspond to the basketwork of the Andamans. The Onges, the finest of the Andaman basket workers, have two types of basket, one intended to last and one made purely for some temporary purpose. When they are on hunting or gathering trips outside Little Andaman they will hastily construct roughly made carriers for whatever they find. Anyone who saw, for example, these rough baskets on Rutland would assume reasonably enough that the Onge baskets are inferior to those of the peoples of Great Andaman, but in fact these purely temporary carriers, intended to be thrown away after their immediate use, are extremely well made. They are plaited over a frame of solid reeds, about two and a half centimetres in diameter, and split in half longways. The split reeds are arranged and tied in a star position to give the base and then bent upwards, the ends being joined to a circle of split reed, which forms the rim of the basket. Long ribbons of bark stripped from

285 anything handy are then woven over the frame, the size of the mesh being determined by the nature of the contents for which it is intended; the basket merely has to get the haul back to the camp, and is then thrown away. The real Onge baskets, however, are made with great care and are never carried on these expeditions. [171] They resemble the traditional Semang and Aetà baskets, now abandoned in favour of foreign types.

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less plentiful and containing a great deal of wax, and is greatly prized by the Onges. The darker bees, common in China, Celebes, Borneo and beyond, build their nests in cavities in the rocks, or in tree-trunks. Their honey, darker and with less wax, is more plentiful, but not so fine; when there is enough of the golden honey the Onges ignore the darker variety.

Few of the fruits on Little Andaman contain much sugar, but the Onges eat more than enough honey to compensate any deficiency that would otherwise occur. Whatever the fruit in season, men, women and children climb happily about like acrobats, hanging in the trees to get at it and the honey that goes with it. To chop the tree down is, of course, easiest and the obvious first choice for any Onge. Failing this, and their hooked poles, they climb up the nearby lianas into the branches, or walk up the trunk – an easy feat for them with their very long arms and almost prehensile toes.

Although there are arak nuts and betel leaves in the forest, the Onges ignore them. They are the same variety as elsewhere; *Areca catechu* and *Piper betel*. The Nicobarese are so addicted to them that many have lips and teeth hideously deformed as a result, but this is quite unknown among the Onges, contrary to earlier reports. The appearance of addiction in the Nicobars may have occurred after the separation of the peoples.

With all these fruits the Onges consume vast quantities of honey from the two species of bee, *dorsata* and *nigrocinta*. During the rainy season they can only get at the darker, poorer honey of *nigrocinta*, which builds nests under boulders or in crevices of trees or rocks. The Onges' real honey orgies occur, therefore, in the dry season, when the honey birds (Indicationidae), common in Africa and all over Asia, lead them to the trees where the golden honey of *dorsata* is hidden.

When one of the Onges finds a nest of bees he puts a mark on the rock or tree as a sign of ownership. None of the others would then dare to take possession of it, for fear of punishment by the group,[1] but when the time comes to take the honey everyone helps in the hard work of getting at the nest and opening it up. On one trip from Labanar to Togalanghe, on 19 March 1954, the Onges pointed out over twenty *Nigrocinta* nests to me, all reserved ready for use

[1] However deep in the forest a crime is committed, it will inevitably be discovered in the end, and punished by banishment from the community.

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They have neither incantations, amulets nor propitiating signs to help them. Even the *marque de chasse* found on their arrow heads had no major significance; in all probability they merely served to indicate the best arrow and at most they served as a warning to the womenfolk not to touch them (it is interesting that I never saw any woman or child with a bow or an arrow). But this is as far as they go towards superstition, and its only effect is to enhance the division of duties between the sexes.

The Onges, unlike the Jarawas and Arioto, have never lost the art of canoe making, and the building of a new canoe is an important matter. The selected tree, always one of the three species of *Sterculia*, is felled and then hollowed out slowly and laboriously with a rudimentary form of hatchet, the work often being done by one man alone. The weight of the felled trunk makes it necessary for the work to be done where it falls, but after much patient whittling away the resulting canoe is extremely light, with thin walls, though still not light enough to be carried to the water, never far away. A series of short logs are used as rollers in the age-old way and the builder's friends all gather to help clear a way through the undergrowth and prepare the rollers. Only a few are needed; all is soon ready and the Onges watch delightedly as the canoe glides away down to the shore. These canoe-ways often provided me with an easy path to the sea if I came upon them in the forest. Sometimes they led not to shore but to one of the many creeks, where salt water and marine fauna penetrate miles inland and make it easy for the Onges to launch their canoes from a point far from the sea.

The Onge canoe, hollowed out in one piece, is a survival of the ancient canoes of the Neolithic age, found in Switzerland and elsewhere in Europe. It survives in the Andamans, and through Oceania to the Americas, in northern Asia (notably among the Ainu) in south-west Asia, and even in south-east Africa.

The canoe has no distinction between bow and stern, and is commonly navigated from either. At each end of the canoe a crude platform juts out, on which the harpoon throwers stand. Very careful attention is paid to the float, which is fragile, and is therefore kept on the lee side. The object of it is to prevent the canoe from capsizing, which it is otherwise very liable to do owing to its round keel, always left in the natural shape of the tree-trunk. I had some experiences of rough seas in one of these canoes

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Once struck by the harpoon the turtle is trapped by the cord tied to the head of the harpoon while the shaft, detached by the blow, floats on the water till it is picked up. The target is large, the distance is short, and so the harpoon never fails.

The spirits of the night do not walk on the sea, so the turtle-hunting expeditions are all sea-borne, the canoes setting out to meet the turtles as they come in towards the shore to mate. When the moon is high the tropical seas are as clear as by day; on dark nights the resin torches carried in the canoes light the sea for a fair distance. Beyond their range, the turtles as they swim disturb tiny marine creatures, which promptly emit their phosphorescence, revealing clearly to the Onges the path of their unsuspecting victim.

These torches are about one metre long and fifteen centimetres in diameter, made of twisted palm leaves tightly bound with reed fibres. Inside is a carefully balanced mixture of resin and embers, which burns with a very bright flame. In recent years a variant has been introduced – huge lumps of gum were driven on to the shores of Little Andaman from some unknown distant shipwreck, and the Onges, having discovered how well the unknown substance burned, began mixing it with the embers in their torches. I can still see the Onges' child-like pleasure as they admired the effect of their new product, a gift, like their petrol-drum cooking-pots, from the sea.

Their torches for use on land are much smaller – about thirty centimetres long and ten centimetres in diameter, but made in exactly the same way. It is interesting that similar torches are found eastwards throughout Polynesia and are used everywhere in the same way for hunting turtles and their eggs from the same type of canoe.

The victim, struck as it comes to the top to breathe, disappears at once into the sea, dragging the cord with it. In less than ten minutes, however, it reappears on the surface and is hoisted aboard, often almost helping itself into the canoe with its thrashing flippers. Quite often turtles are caught while they are asleep on the surface, or mating, in which case the pair are easily captured. And in stormy weather, when the high seas make it difficult for them to negotiate the reefs back to the open water, the Onges can catch them and 'ride' them to the shore. I have seen the surviving Arioto do this,

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Andaman, in Yeratil Jig (near Port Anson, about fifteen miles from Long Island) in Diglipur (or Dilyapur) Creek, near Port Cornwallis, and in Wilima Jig,[1] but they are now extinct. In March 1952 the Onges had described the presence of crocodiles so clearly to me as to leave no doubt what they meant, and I soon received confirmation when I found their tracks on the sand about one kilometre from the mouth of Jackson Creek, on the right bank, and then saw some lying on the shore across the creek. Through my field glasses I saw small birds pecking between the teeth of the great wide-open jaws. As we approached they slid lazily into the sea, some reappearing a little later, their cavernous mouths rising vertically out of the water. Every day after that I saw them swimming quietly near the banks, and one afternoon my men and I between us saw over a dozen, near Nachuge, dozing in the mud or in the water.

The Onges assured me that crocodiles will come out of the water to a certain whistle. I got them to try it; the Onges whistled, and whistled again, but no crocodiles came!

Very different from the great turtles and the crocodiles, but equally important in the daily life of the Onges, are the crabs from which the islanders make their ancient and very characteristic pipes. They eat the crabs and use the claws to make the pipes, cutting them across the joint and boring a hole in the end, as they have done since time immemorial, to smoke aromatic leaves from the forest. Fragments of similar pipes, charred with use, appear in even the lowest strata of the kitchen-middens, dating back thousands of years and proving the antiquity of the smoking habit. Contrary to popular belief, smoking did not begin everywhere with the introduction of tobacco – in Asia at least men smoked thousands of years ago.

The claw pipes of the Onges have a groove cut round the end which goes into the mouth, so that the teeth can grip it better. I have seen identical pipes, with the same groove, in the Melville Islands, where there are many other signs of ethnographic connections with the Andamans. The canoes, for example, are identical with those of the Andamans; the peoples themselves, however, are today very different physically.

[1] According to Portman a man was dragged into the water here on 11 May 1894 by a crocodile and killed; several similar incidents have occurred since.

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252 372 824 their love of existing with as little effort as possible is paramount. Since any wood is as good as the next for making a fire, the spirits conveniently have nothing to say in the matter. In other 782 222 circumstances material considerations lead to quite the opposite effect: when the Onges dig up roots or tubers they not only replace the earth, but cover the place with leaves, the ritual having the good practical objective of appeasing the spirits and ensuring further supplies.

171 224 The preservation of skulls for magical purposes or out of pure superstition survives mainly in Asia and Oceania. In Asia it coincides with other beliefs which demand the killing of domestic animals by strangulation. I have seen this practised along the high reaches of the valley of the Brahmaputra, particularly among the Abor, and the Nagas, and in many other tribes to the south of Tibet and China, all of whom preserve skulls. Head-hunting, found throughout southern Asia, in the islands, and as far as Oceania, is also practised in the areas where animal skulls are preserved.

171 The preservation of animal skulls, particularly bear skulls, is still practised in mongoloid peoples as far as the north of Asia; apart from the Andamans and the Nicobars, human and animal bones are preserved in many parts of Indonesia and as far as New Guinea. In the corona of small islands along the west coast of Sumatra the custom coincides with many others, as well as with certain types of huts and canoes, all present in the Andamans and Nicobars. A good example are the huts raised up off the ground on stilts, common in the Nicobars, Nias, Engano, Mentawai and various parts of Indonesia. The single-boom canoes of these areas, quite apart from their general similarity of structure, all have certain identical features, even to the method of fixing the lateral float of green wood, with pointed hardwood pegs stuck in it like spills. This, again, cannot be due to chance; it must be the effect of a very ancient cultural diffusion, now surviving only in a few specific areas.

224 531 462 The skulls preserved by the Onges have one point of interest; it is the duty of the wife to clean the trophies brought back by her proud husband and then paint them lovingly with lines of ochre. After every successful hunting expedition the wives can be seen busily painting, while the husbands look on with satisfaction.

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head ornaments and religious ceremonies. In Oceania there is, too, the habit of changing personal names from time to time so prevalent among the Onges, and the existence of actual linguistic connections between Nicobarese, Andamanese, Semang, Aetà and peoples of Oceania have been demonstrated by experts.

Any differences which exist today are the result of centuries of contact with other peoples which the Semang and Aetà have experienced, unlike the Andamanese, who thus represent today the true Negritos. While life generally has changed somewhat over the centuries for the Semang and Aetà, certain typical facets of their culture have remained unaltered. Ritual cutting and distributing of game, the use of the arrow harpoon (always unfeathered) and the simple Onge-Negrito bow are still the same, despite the fact that the three groups have been separated for a very long time. Even the very absence of defensive weapons is a common feature; admittedly outside the Andamans arrows are poisoned and some may be feathered, but this is a recent and imitative innovation which is not found among the Andamanese, by virtue of their constant isolation. The persistence among the Onges of the simple bow tends to support the idea of Little Andaman as the first stage in the northward spread of the Negritos after they reached the island from Sumatra via the Nicobars. In Malacca the Semang have retained the same bow, as have the Aetà in the Philippines.

Among what may be termed similarities of physical habits is nose-rubbing as a sign of affection, found in the Andamans, in Oceania, and parts of Papuasia and Melanesia. In all these areas there is the same belief that pregnancy is due to entry of a spirit into the body, and the same habit of suckling children for as long as four years. Similar too throughout the area are the methods of 'curing' disease, such as smearing with ochre and heavy massage carried out beside a fire, swallowing of balls of ochre, and the 'smoking' of wounds, smeared with a mixture of ochre and honey. As protection from the sun or the rains (especially for the young children) crude umbrellas are made from giant palm leaves.

There are no prayers or propitiatory sacrifices to ensure health and well being, but there is throughout the area the same concept of mysterious forces to be feared, evaded, or let loose against enemies – never loved. Generally they are thought of in terms of spirits, usually active at night. There is some divergence in the

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way in which the spirits are invoked against enemies, involving the use of some personal possession – an example is the invariable destruction of the used *naquinegbe*, or of hair after shaving. The same fear of the night induced by the idea of spirits walking abroad led to the making of torches from rolled palm leaves containing a mixture of embers and resin.

From the Andamans to Oceania the chief spirit is generally imagined in the form of a giant lizard, living at the top of the sky and ruling the storms; none of the peoples who believe in him ever eat any lizard or lizard-like creature. All of them have the same sexually suggestive dances, both male and female, sometimes inspired by the monitor or dragon-lizard, symbol of desire, and often associated with miming and dramatic representations of real and imaginary scenes. These dances, with their *joie de vivre*, are accompanied by the smoking of aromatic leaves in pipes which are frequently made from natural objects such as the claws of crustacea. The Onges in fact have since very ancient times used only this type as shown in the lower levels of the kitchen-middens dating back at least five thousand years. Everywhere, pipes of this kind are used indiscriminately by both sexes, passing from mouth to mouth. Pipes identical in every way with those of the Onges are found to the east of the archipelago, well into Oceania, and I have myself also seen them on Melville Island, north of Australia, always with the same notches for the teeth to grip. This undeniable evidence of the spread of identical pipes over so wide an area long before the possibility of European contacts cannot in my opinion be attributed other than to migration over vast distances in very ancient times.

Similar coincidences apply in the case of the arrow harpoon and indeed harpoons in general. I cannot agree with Brown in his assertion that the harpoon dates from the arrival of European influences, which brought the use of iron; the harpoon points made by long and patient working of *Tridacna* shells which I found in the kitchen-middens of the Andamans are in my view enough to refute the theory.

The canoes from which these harpoons are used, with the absence of distinction between bow and stern and the single float on the lee side, are extremely typical. They are identical in peoples which have been widely separated for a very long time and appear not only on the Andamans, and as far as Oceania, but also in North

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Queensland and (as the Cape Bedford type) elsewhere. Oars, method of fixing the booms and float – all are similar throughout the area, including the Andamans.

Even game, once caught, is treated and distributed similarly by these peoples, from the Andamans to Oceania. Cooking is done without salt, in earth ovens (whether or not fire or red-hot stones are used) very different from those of Africa and America. The Semang and Aetà of today know how to make fire by friction, as do the peoples of New Guinea, Australia and Polynesia; the Tasmans also have the knowledge to do so, but prefer to carry burning logs with them on their journeys, like the Andamanese. In certain parts of New Guinea and perhaps in some of the Pacific islands (as in the Andamans) the art of fire-making was unknown or possibly forgotten until recent times; it is said that the Papuans of the Bay of Astralobius knew nothing of the art until the middle of the nineteenth century. But the only sure information comes from the Andamans, where, whether through ignorance or loss of knowledge, the art of fire-making is unknown and fire is always carried everywhere.

Among the objects typical of the Andamans and found also among the Semang, the Aetà, and other Oceanic peoples are the digging stick and the crude hatchet. The former, used for gathering edible roots and tubers, is merely a pointed stick, but every family possesses one. The hatchet is slightly more elaborate, having both handle and blade, and like the digging stick, occurs always in virtually the same form.[1] Objects woven from vegetable fibres are also very similar in appearance – often very durable and sometimes pleasing by any standards. In some places woven breast-plates are used in warfare, but here the Jarawas differ, using single sheets of bark.

These are but a few of the many examples which one can find of this striking similarity between these widely separated peoples. And alongside cultural similarities there exist others, anthropological and physical, which cannot be overlooked. Physically the

[1] This is simply a cutting tool fixed into a natural elbow in a suitable branch. The blade is fixed into the wood near the elbow, and the branch is cut off, so as to leave a short handle. The whole thing is reminiscent of a swan's head on a long neck, and is easily turned into a crude plane or adze by revolving the blade in the haft through a right angle.

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most striking of these is ambidexterity. This is the general rule in the Onges and also appears as a normal trait in the primitive peoples of Oceania, America and Asia. Another physical characteristic of the Onges, reported also in Tasmans and various peoples of Oceania, is the early onset of ageing in both sexes; in the Tasmans the women are rarely fertile after the age of thirty, and this is also probably the case with the Onges. Unlike the Tasmans, however, the Onges, though sharing their very black skin colour, have among other physical differences markedly scant body hair. A study of their blood groups by Dr H. Lehmann (see also Mourant) has moreover lent very considerable support to the external physical evidence in favour of a relationship between the Andamanese and the people of Oceania, both past and present.

From the anthropological point of view perhaps the most outstanding feature of all these peoples is that despite their extreme aggressiveness towards outsiders their corporate sense is such that they have no need of leaders to give orders. Rarely are there hereditary leaders; such as they are, their leaders are chosen on the basis of outstanding powers, such as supposed clairvoyance, as in the Andamanese.

The Andamanese themselves know nothing of their origins, lost in the mists of time, and it is for us to trace them, working back along the paths cleared by the anthropologist, the ethnographer and the archaeologist. They represent today the survival, almost unchanged, of a culture once to be found all over Oceania, spread thousands of years ago by canoes hardly different from those the Onges use today. They carried the unknown seamen from island to island, bearing with them a way of life which in the Andamans at least was never to change – a point of arrival, rather than of departure. Driven in on themselves by circumstances of geography just as other circumstances now unknown had driven them there originally, they have remained isolated, dwindling in numbers over the centuries, until they were discovered by the modern world. Their reception of outsiders, however they come and whoever they may be, is aggressive; consciously or unconsciously the Andamanese seek to preserve the only way of life they know. And who can be sure they are wrong?

No one could deny the demographic decadence of the islanders,

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kitchen-middens to have been contemporaneous with the introduction of the pig, i.e. to have been introduced by outsiders. It would be possible, using radio carbon methods, to calculate this date more accurately, but on purely archaeological evidence the introduction of pottery would appear to have occurred some five thousand years ago.

8 ABSENCE OF CANNIBALISM

If we may accept the evidence of the kitchen-middens, there has never at any time been cannibalism in the Andamans, although the practice certainly existed in the later Palaeolithic era; the Andamanese must thus have been isolated in the archipelago long before the practice became widespread.

9 DRINK

The Andamanese ignorance of any drink other than water may be regarded as additional evidence of the great antiquity of their culture.

10 ABSENCE OF CLOTHING

The Jarawas of both sexes have always remained completely naked. The Onges have only in comparatively recent times adopted a form of genital covering for their womenfolk; this custom has spread as far as the north of Great Andaman, and it seems probable that the separation of the Jarawas from the Onges dates from this time.

11 ABSENCE OF TATTOOING

All primitive peoples who are habitually completely naked adorn the body in some way. The Onges have never progressed beyond the early stage of painting themselves with ochre, and do not tattoo. Their sole ornaments are small necklaces of tusk shells, strips of bark, and sometimes flowers. In all this they resemble the Tasmans (see, however, p. 143 for certain important differences), who seem to have remained in an equally early stage of cultural development.

12 TOTEMISM AND THE CLAN

Here again the complete absence of any traces appears to indicate isolation before the spread of these very ancient concepts. Neither the Onges nor the Jarawas have ever progressed beyond the stage of independent groups of families.